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# YISRÖEL

THE  
FIRST  
JEWISH  
OMNIBUS



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FIRST  
JEWISH  
OMNIBUS

EDITED BY  
JOSEPH LEFTWICH

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# FOREWORD

BY

JOSEPH LEFTWICH

You have lain with me, and these  
Your children are mine too.  
Instead of conquering me,  
You have my blood in you.

I AM not of those—so large a section of Jews—who go delving into the ancestry of every one who has achieved fame or recognition, in the attempt to show that the things he has done which count are to be traced back to his Jewish blood. I am not always sure that they are. I am not even quite sure how much of our own blood is Jewish. In the course of the centuries, how much stranger blood has become mingled with ours, how much non-Jewish mentality has grown to be part of the Jewish type of thought? Life is so composite a thing—if you try to take hold of it anywhere, you find the whole totality of it coming up in your hand. You cannot draw your frontiers here or there, and have them stay where you have put them. There is everlastingly a process of shifting going on; what was here to-day is there to-morrow; the air we exhale, others inhale; out of our bones where they are laid to rest new life springs up; there is unceasing action and reaction.

All things have been here in this earth of ours from the beginning, potentially—nothing has come into it from outside—there is only this constant motion, this constant changing from one thing to another, even from life to death, and back again through the slow stages of evolution, from death to life.

If blood be the test, there must be Jewish blood in almost all men, for the blood of the uncountable number of Jews and Jewesses who have throughout the centuries gone away and become merged, so that there is no sign left of what they were, must have filtered through by now in crossing and re-crossing into the greater part of living men and women. Perhaps the non-Jewish world with its interfusion of Jewish blood is more definitely influenced by it than the Jews in whom, maybe, it is the interfusion of non-Jewish blood that is working its influence.

We may find as fruitful a theme in non-Jewish influences on Jewish deed and Jewish thought, as in Jewish influences on non-Jewish thought and non-Jewish deed. Was it Jewish blood that

made Angelo and Rembrandt the most Jewish artists the world has had, or Milton the most Biblical poet in literature outside the Bible? Has Jewish ancestry been traced to any of these? And if it could be traced, has all the hundred per cent. Jewish blood in the unquestioned Jewish artists and Jewish writers produced work more Jewish in feeling and outlook than that of these men, whose Jewish blood even if it be proved to have existed at all—and probably somewhere, sometime, there was an interfusion, however slight—could not have been anything like what is believed to be the hundred per cent. Jewish blood in the veins of say, Solomon J. Solomon, or to take perhaps the greatest artist the Jews have till now produced, Camille Pissarro? Or have these been swerved from Jewishness by an infusion of non-Jewish blood, somewhere, sometime, unknown of to them or to us?

I do not wish to be thought of those, who like a lecturer to the Jewish Historical Society of America not long ago, claimed on circumstantial evidence that Dante was of Jewish ancestry, or of those who suggest that because there is no direct evidence as to the ancestry of El Greco, and someone once called him a Jew, that therefore he was probably Jewish, the only Jew of really first-rate rank in plastic art.

Perhaps we should all of us find very disconcerting facts coming to light, if it were scientifically possible to carry out the proposal of some German anti-Semites that the Government should enforce an official blood test of all the people in the country, to determine whether they have any Jewish blood in them. Is blood alone really so great a factor, the sole determining influence in anything at all?

The more we think into life, the more we find it a puzzling maze of contradictions, and the only lesson we are ever likely to learn is that very few of our definite judgments have more in them than a small portion of the truth.

It was Emerson who asked—Am I so many cows and so many potatoes and so many gallons of water, because these things have fed me and have built up my frame?

So with this digging and delving we will have nothing to do. But that does not mean that there is not something in this world of ours, which we and all others agree is a Jew and Jewish. I am doubtful whether it is racial, definitely, solely racial, and based upon direct descent from Palestinian Jews and upon a direct

development of Palestinian Jewishness, despite the dispersion of much longer a period than that which has elapsed since the destruction of Jewish national life in Palestine. How big was the Diaspora in the time of Christ? It is said that there were over a million Jews in Egypt alone in the First Century, Jews already then cut off from national Jewishness and Jewish Palestinianism and the Temple cult. I am not entirely sure that Philo's remark at that time—Greece is my Fatherland and Palestine my Motherland—meant more than what the Christian means when he looks to Palestine as the cradle of his faith.

Jewishness has been growing continually away from Palestinianism and the conception of a Jewish State, and has been evolving into Judaism, a religion founded like Christianity in Palestine, with its roots in the lives of the Patriarchs and the ideals of the Prophets. But it has grown slowly, gradually, into a spreading tree with thick and luxuriant foliage. Must the tree tear itself away from its roots or else turn head downwards or be nothing but roots? Must a great river, always as it flows continuing to be the river, suddenly repent of carrying its waters out to sea and turn and flow back to its source? Or must it else call the sea inland to make of it, the river, part of the sea? Is there no alternative to yea or nay? Cannot we have both?

It is difficult to define anything, to mark out any idea without finding that it overlaps, that it has implications which bring further implications, and finally bring in the whole world and the whole universe.

But there still is that which we and the world agree to call this or the other. Bread may resolve itself into the cornfield, and the soil and the manure and the sun and the rain and God's bounty on the one hand, and into the physical assimilation of the digestive organs and all that follows man till his death and after on the other hand. But momentarily, while it exists as bread, we are agreed to call it bread.

And so with the Jew. Reason it away as we will, define and re-define—something there is which we and the world call Jew. That is our standard. What the Jew becomes after five generations of intermarriage and assimilation is another matter. What he becomes after three generations of spiritual transplanting, even remaining outwardly a Jew and called by the rest of the world a Jew, that, too, ■ another matter. How long a Palestinian atheist

Jewish nationalist is going to remain a Jew and breed Jews and not Palestinians ■ likewise a matter of another kind.

But granted what we are to-day, with all our qualities and defects, we are something—whatever the constituents—which the world and we ourselves recognise to be Jewish. Though to me the greatest of the constituents seems to be living as far as possible as my father lived, according to the traditions of Jewishness and Judaism as they have grown to be to-day, and for the coming generations as they may evolve to be.

When I was asked to edit this book (I cannot claim the credit of the idea—for the publishers had already begun to work on it when they invited me to take it over), I wondered at first what point there was in getting together a collection of stories by a lot of people writing in different languages and belonging to different schools, with nothing apparently in common between them, save their Jewish birth.

Are they a connected unit, these stories by Jewish-born authors? Are they—as a collection of English stories, or German or French stories would be—linked together by a common language, a common country, a common literary tradition and development? They are a collection of stories from many lands, written in many tongues, according to many traditions. If there is any unity it is in the Yiddish and Hebrew group. But what links the rest?

"The mere listing of Jewish notables is a puerile enterprise," as my friend Dr. Roback remarks in his *Jewish Influence on Modern Thought*. But Roback goes on to urge, and there are many who agree with him, that there is a distinct Jewish contribution to modern culture. "To appropriate to France every noted man and woman born in France is to lose sight of the facts of heredity," he writes, "as if they were wholly products of environment and not the result of heredity. A man's ethnic affiliations for many generations back are more significant than his birth-place."

"The literature of Israel," says Israel Zangwill, "in its widest sense comprises the contributions made by Jews to the thesaurus of the world. All alphabets and all vocabularies are drawn into its service."

Similarly, Mr. Paul Goodman, in his *Synagogue and the Church*, claims that "in the term 'Jewish literature' we should

include every literary production that is the fruit of a Jewish mind—whether it be the scientific work of Maimonides in Arabic, the philosophical treatises of Spinoza in Latin, or the poems of Heinrich Heine in German. Even in such an unexpected quarter as Christian literature, we meet with Jewish writers, who, like Neander, have left their mark on Christian thought."

I have myself, many years ago, when hardly out of my 'teens, declared with conviction that "all art created by Jews ■ Jewish art." But I have since then "assimilated so much and passed on," as a friend of mine has well written, "that those old enthusiasms seem a little distant, strange and even hobbledchoy." I am not so sure now. There are so many things about which I feel "contrariwise, if it was so it might be."

But in any event, we must guard against the tendency that exists to claim important men as Jews when there is no warrant for it. Roback has suggested bringing out a publication entitled *Great Men Who are Not And Never Were Jews*. Legends grow up about alleged Jewish origins, and they persist. Jules Verne, for instance, is said to be the son of a Polish Jew. Henri Barbusse (married to a Jewess—so were many others, Jokai, for instance) is taken for granted as a Jew. Zangwill did not hesitate to claim Carducci, and Robert Browning, Maeterlinck, Franz Wedekind, and Cardinal Newman have all been paraded as partly Jewish.

Yet the list of Jews in literature is impressive enough. When I compiled my list for inclusion in this volume, the publishers, watching the mounting number of famous names, asked whether there are any writers who are not Jews. Indeed, there are. Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Cervantes, Goethe, Balzac, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Hardy, no one has ever suggested that they were Jews. Nor hundreds of others who outshine all the Jews we can bring in. Even though Anatole France is claimed as partly Jewish, and Montaigne is half-Jewish, and Paul Heyse, the German Nobel prizeman for literature had a Jewish mother ("my mother," he writes in his memoirs, "was the youngest daughter of the Hofjude Salomon Jacob Salomon, and his wife Helene, née Mayer") and Bergson is wholly Jewish, and not only a philosopher, but also a Nobel prizeman for literature. We must not forget Moses Mendelssohn, of whom Carlyle said that "his 'Phaedon' in its chaste precision and simplicity of style may

almost remind us of Xenophon. Socrates, to our mind, has spoken in no modern language so like Socrates, as here by the lips of this great and cultivated Jew." Proust, said to be the greatest literary reputation and influence since the war, was the son of a Jewess, and his "Jewish" qualities are stressed by both his admirers and his critics. André Spire speaks of Alexandre Dumas  *fils*  obeying "some obscure promptings of his race which was not entirely unconnected with Israel." Blasco Ibanez once said, "All the temperament I have, the passion which is in my blood, the vividness of my imagination, I know is of Jewish origin." (This boasting of Jewish blood by part Jews is constantly met with—though conversely there are half-Jews and whole Jews who try to conceal it, and there are Anti-Semitic Jews, like Otto Weininger, Arthur Trebitsch, and Karl Marx, whose part-Jewish parentage has nevertheless made anti-Marxists identify his teachings with the "Jewish Spirit," which Marx hated and denounced. Anti-Semites are as keen at digging up supposed Jewish antecedents as hyper-Jews, and find them in the most unlikely and non-existent places. They once accused so blameless a man as Sir Morell Mackenzie of being descended from a Polish Jew named Marcovitz, drawing from him the vehement retort—"my respected grandfather who was extremely proud of his Highland descent and never set foot outside the United Kingdom would have been surprised to hear that he was a Polish Jew!"—Paul Heyse made a point of emphasising his Jewish origin in his autobiographical sketch to the Nobel Institute. So did Metchnikoff. Sven Hedin, who is not only an explorer, but writes graphically of his explorations, has been at pains to trace his descent to his "most important ancestor," a German Jew who went to live in Sweden. Incidentally, the explorer-writer is often found among Jews, from Eldad, whose legends provoked the counter-legends of Prester John, and Benjamin of Tudela to Professor Vambery, Nathaniel Isaacs, the warrior-discoverer of Natal, created "Chief" of Natal, who wrote *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa*, Emin Pasha, Slatin Pasha and Sir Aurel Stein). Pinero's influence on the modern theatre is immense. And that virile writer Bret Harte, had a Jewish grandfather. So had Sir Henry Newbolt. And Maartens Maartens had a Jewish father. So had Stephen Hudson, and others who do not wish to be considered Jews

But to quote Roback again: "Non-Jews have produced Phidias and Plato, Aristotle and Hippocrates, Bach and Beethoven, Raphael and Michelangelo, Dante and Shakespeare—are the Jews to be pitted against all the nations of the world, from antiquity to modern times?"

And yet—there is the Bible. "Where does Homer stand compared with the Bible?" asked Harnack. "Of its thousands there is not a verse, not a word that is not thick-studded with human emotions," said Walt Whitman. "All other literatures seem 'trifles light as air,'" wrote Zangwill. "I see now that the Greeks were only handsome striplings, while the Jews were always men—powerful, indomitable men—who have fought and suffered on every battlefield of human thought," cried Heine. "How small Sinai appears when Moses stands upon it!"

When I set to work on this book, it was suggested to me that it should begin with the Book of Ruth. About that time, a London evening paper publishing a series of short stories, printed the story of Samson and Delilah. And there are perfect short stories in Jonah, in Job, in Deborah, in Esther, in Samuel, in the saga of David, the Song of Songs, the mission of Elijah, in the merry tale of Balaam and his Ass, in Judith and in Tobith in the Apocrypha. Perhaps it is better to remember how accessible the Bible is.

The Talmud, too, has short stories. There is, for instance, an early anticipation of Sherlock Holmes' methods; it is the story of a man of Athens who bought a slave in Jerusalem. As they went out of the gate of Jerusalem on the way back to Athens, the slave said to his master—"if we hasten we shall catch up a company of people." And the master said: "I see no people." And the slave replied: "Yet there is a company of people in front of us, and they have with them a camel, blind of one eye, a she-camel, big with two young, and carrying two leathern flasks, one of wine, and one of vinegar, and she is four miles ahead of us, and the driver is not a Jew."

Afterwards he explained that he had told that the camel was blind of one eye, because the grass was cropped only along one side of the road, since the camel could see only on that side. He had seen that she was big with two young from the impression of the belly on the ground. The wine and the vinegar had dripped

on either side and by their nature had left different marks in the sand. "And how do you know that the driver is not a Jew?" asked his master. "Because a Jew does not make water in the middle of the road, but goes into a corner," the slave replied. And that the camel was four miles ahead he knew because the hoof-marks were still just perceptible. Had it been further ahead there would no longer have been any impression.

Jewish legends, too, provide rich material. There is an old Italian story of a hermit who found a heap of gold and ran away from the temptation. He was stopped by a band of thieves, to whom he explained why he was fleeing, and when they laughed at him and made him lead them to the gold, they rejoiced and let him go his way. They then sent one of their number into the town to buy meat and wine, and while he was away the rest determined to kill him when he returned, so that there should be one less to share the spoil. When they had killed him they ate and drank, but the dead robber had also thought that if the rest were out of the way he would have the gold all to himself, and he had poisoned the meat and the wine, and so they all died.

There is an ancient Jewish legend about Moses, which tells a very similar tale. Moses meets an avaricious man. He transforms three heaps of dust into gold, and leaves the man gloating. The gold is too heavy for him to carry, so seeing Bedouin pass on camels, he asks them to help and offers them in return one of the three heaps. The Bedouin load the gold on to their camels, and meanwhile send the man to the town to buy bread for them. When he returns they kill him in order to have all the treasure for themselves. But the man had poisoned the bread, grudging them their third, and so they all perish.

There was a Jewish Rip van Winkle, Rabbi Onias Ha-Me'Aggel (first century) who is said to have slept seventy years, and when he awoke, and no one would believe he was Onias, he sought death.

There was also a Jewish M $\ddot{u}$ nchhausen, Rabbah Bar Bar Hana (third century). This ■ the Rabbi who saw a flock of geese whose feathers fell out owing to their fatness, while a whole river of fat flowed beneath them. He related that on one occasion his boat was driven for three days and three nights between the fins of a fish which was travelling in the opposite direction, and to help us to realise the length of the fish he adds that we are not

to suppose he was not travelling quickly all the time, for his boat had the speed of an arrow. Once he came to an island, which turned out to be a gigantic fish at rest, with sand on its back in which there was grass growing. "We landed and made a fire and cooked our meal. But when the fish felt the heat he rolled over, and we would have been drowned had not the ship been near."

Fables and parables abound in Rabbinic literature, and the Jewish preachers or Maggidim up to the present day always wove a story into their homiletics to capture the mind of the hearer.

Rabbah Ben Nahmani (third century) "was wont to begin his lectures with witty aphorisms and interesting anecdotes which put his hearers in a cheerful mood, and made them receptive of serious thoughts."

There is a long list of tales in the *Arabian Nights* "that appear from several investigations to be from Jewish sources. V. Chauvin has suggested that these Jewish tales and others were introduced by a Jewish convert to Islam, Wahb Ibn Munabbih (seventh century). Altogether some forty-five stories—nearly one-ninth of the whole—can be traced to this Jewish editor."

Jews produced a great literature in the Middle Ages. We have it on the assurance of the initiate, and though, unfortunately, the translators have mostly confined themselves to the liturgical work of the period, there was much good secular work done, too. There is nothing liturgical, for example, in this poem of Yehuda Halevi :

"Upon my knees, but yesterday,  
I dandled Love, and watched his play.  
He saw his image in my eyes,  
And kissed them both in wanton wise ;  
Sweet rogue ! it was, as well I wist,  
His image, not mine eyes he kissed."

There were writers of stories among these men of the Middle Ages. Joseph Jacobs speaks of one who flourished between 1262 and 1269, who translated Rabbi Joel's Hebrew version of *Kalilah ve-Dimnah* into Latin, and his translation, says Jacobs, was the source from which that great Indian collection of fables became so widely spread in almost all European tongues (it is claimed that nearly one-tenth of the most popular European folk-tales, including elements of *Reynard the Fox* and of the *Decameron* are derived from these translations of the *Kalilah ve-Dimnah*).

Joseph Zabara, who also lived in Spain in the thirteenth century, wrote stories and fables on the model of the *Kalilah ve-Dimnah*. Berechiah Ben Natronai Ha-Nakdan, believed to be an English Jew of the twelfth century, is the author of a set of 113 fables. Gedal ah ibn Yanya wrote fables and stories in the sixteenth century. Joseph Jacobs tells us that Johannes Pauli, who in the fifteenth century wrote a collection of jests and funny stories which went through innumerable editions and became the "Joe Miller" of Germany, was a Jewish convert to Christianity. Some of his stories were taken over into the *Hundred Merry Tales* used by Shakespeare. Immanuel of Rome, the friend of Dante, known in Italian literature as Manuello Giudeo, is an important figure in literature (the Jews of Italy appear to have played many parts. "Many Jews in medieval Italy were graceful writers in Italian," says Israel Abrahams—and one hears of a Jew who was a famous violinist, Jacopo Sansecolo, who was also amazingly handsome, and was the original of Raphael's "Apollo on Pegasus.")

There was, too, Sueskind of Trimberg, the Jew among the thirteenth-century German Minnesingers—a Jewish troubadour, a strolling minstrel. But Jews have done all sorts of things in Germany. There were even a considerable number of Jews, Jacob Wassermann reminds us, among the robber bands that infested Germany between 1750 and 1820. Daniel Levi de Barros, who fled from the Inquisition in Spain, and died in Amsterdam in 1701, is said to have been the most fruitful author among all the Spanish-Portuguese Jews of his time, and he wrote romances, tales, comedies and poems.

The love of Jews for tales is illustrated by the amazing popularity of the Baba-Buch (a baba story has in Yiddish become synonymous with any far-fetched tale). And the way in which Jews have contributed to the popular love of a story, and a song among people all over the world, is shown by the queer, out-of-the-way examples of, say, Bucurestanu, whose songs sung in Bucharest became Roumanian folk-songs and still are sung in Roumania, few suspecting that they were written by a Jew, and Elijah the ballad singer, the Beni-Israel poet, who lived in Bombay and wrote ballads in Mahrati and Hindustani, many of which are still extant.

In speaking of the various directions in which Jews have

reached out in literature, we must also not omit the great part that Jews have played as guides and critics of literature. In recent years there have been in this field such towering men as George (Cohen) Brandes, perhaps the best known of them all (his brother Eduard was a successful Danish dramatist and novelist); D'Ancona, perhaps the most important Italian critic (there was also the Jew Ascoli, the great Italian philologist); Michael Gershenson, the "greatest and noblest of the Russian historians of literature"; Oscar Levertin, "the chief of the Swedish critics" and himself the author of a notable novel, *Kalonymos*. Professor Martin Lamm, member of the Nobel Prize Award Committee for Literature, now Sweden's most eminent literary authority, is also a Jew. And in Roumania, our own English Dr. Moses Gaster is the author of the standard work on Roumanian literature. There was in England also Sir Israel Gollancz. Among compilers one should also mention Sir Francis Palgrave (Cohen) of *The Golden Treasury*.

But for the most part, Jews wrote their literature, up ■ recent times, mainly for ethical purposes. Jews excelled as scholars, students of Holy Writ, theologians, moralists, and story-telling was merely subsidiary to the great purpose of God-searching, God-teaching and God-praising. Commentary and expounding, admonition and homily, religious philosophy and liturgical poetry were paramount.

Yet it is not only among Jews that "the professional moralist was glad to enlist the services of the fiction-teller under the sacred banners of faith and good works, and fiction emerged timidly from under the wing of the Church."

And just now, it seems, that the most advanced school of writing is returning to that—literature as the tool of the Communist Church.

Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav, one of the first men in Yiddish literature, definitely belongs to the type of the homiletic story-teller. "These are not ordinary stories," says the foreword to his tales. "Their intention is to teach us to serve God, and if we grasp the moral that is in these tales, we shall be pious Jews." (Though most literatures started with apologies like that. "If you look well to it, there is not one of them from which you could not derive a profitable example," says Cervantes of his

*Exemplary Tales*. And in *Quixote*, too, he proclaims that "books of chivalry ■ your game, and your chief purpose ■ destroy their credit with the world." Early English literature similarly explained that "it might be used to enforce and enliven lessons from the pulpit." Richardson "is mighty in sermons and never weary of pointing a moral," and Fielding "endeavoured strongly to inculcate.") It did not prevent Nahman rising to lyric heights in his tales, as in his wonderful description in the "Seven Beggars," of how the heart of the world yearns for the stream of life.

Even Peretz, who was born nearly a century after Rabbi Nahman, did not think of literature when he began. He wrote in order to "teach the masses." "We must speak to them in their language," he said, "that is why I am now writing in the mother tongue." At first he did not see the need of belles lettres. He wanted to instruct the people, to give them popular educational works, scientific, historical. And since the people knew only Yiddish, these works must be written in Yiddish. All the early Jewish writers in both Yiddish and Hebrew were Maskilim, uplifters, educators. Yet it was not long before the artist in Peretz won. "I write for myself, for my own satisfaction," he told Shalom Aleichem. "If I ever think of the reader, it is the higher type of reader, the man who has read and knows a living language."

Since Peretz's day, Yiddish literature has become a force, (Zalman Reisen's five-volume lexicon of Yiddish writers contains about 5,000 biographies), and most of those who write to-day in Yiddish are chiefly concerned with the artistic value of their work. They write in Yiddish for the same reason that "Homer wrote not in Latin, for he was a Greek; and Virgil wrote not in Greek, because he was a Latin." They write "in the tongue which they sucked in with their mother's milk." There are some among them who do not really claim to be Jewish writers, only writers in a particular language that grew up among Jews, the language to which they were born, and the only language in which they can thoroughly express themselves, which they know and love and can mould into music and deep thought, whose sounds run limpid from their tongue and pen.

Zangwill argues that where there is no specific Jewish language there ■ no specific Jewish life. The ardent Yiddishists and the ardent Hebraists wholeheartedly agree, but there are some in

both camps who are beginning to realise that while the language created by the people in the image of its soul ■ of the utmost importance, what is said in that language is also of importance, that the content, too (which does not necessarily mean the subject) must be Jewish, and that heathenish, atheist, un-Jewish thought, garbed in Jewish language, Yiddish or Hebrew, is still heathenish, atheist, un-Jewish.

Israel Abrahams points out that while " from one point of view the New Testament is, after the Hebrew Bible, the most momentous and the greatest product of the Jewish genius, from another point of view several of its constituent parts were alien to that genius."

And to come nearer to our own time, and to the official recognition of Yiddish in Soviet Russia, Dr. Steinberg, himself a former Soviet Minister of Justice, who is now conducting a movement "Back to Judaism," remarks that the word *Ogpu* written up outside in Yiddish make the *Ogpu* no less terrifying.

No doubt the Prophets of Baal called upon the name of Baal in excellent Hebrew, but that did not make Elijah feel any more kindly towards them. Just as Jeroboam ben Nebat was probably a good Palestinian nationalist.

Yet there is so much Jewish thought gone into the structure of the two Jewish languages. They were moulded to the shape of the Jewish brain and of Jewish thought. They grew where Jews lived together in compact masses, lived an intense Jewish life.

"What is the language in which the real life of Israel has been expressed?" asks Zangwill. "The answer," he says, "is the language of the particular country in which each section resided, modified by such words and locutions as expressed the difference between Jews and the rest of their fellow-citizens. These differences were mainly religious, and therefore the vast majority of these additional words and phrases were borrowed from the Hebrew. Added to Spanish, it produced Ladino. Added to German, it produced Yiddish."

■ ■ perhaps symbolic of the relations between Yiddish and Hebrew that the tales of Rabbi Nahman, one of the earliest writers in Yiddish, were written down simultaneously in Yiddish and Hebrew. For the two literatures, like the two languages, are so interwoven that it is hard to point to any real line of

demarcation. Most of the Yiddish writers have written in Hebrew, too, and nearly every Hebrew writer is a Yiddish writer as well.

Yet there has been from the beginning a kind of rivalry between the two tongues. "A generation or two ago," Professor Israel Davidson has written, "Yiddish was regarded as a jargon by the people who read it, and the very men who wrote it had the feeling that they were sacrificing their literary talents on the altar of utilitarianism. Those fond of figurative language called Yiddish the 'maid-servant' of Hebrew. To-day this maid-servant has become her own mistress. In the short space of a quarter of a century Yiddish literature has made such rapid strides that it bids fair to outstrip modern Hebrew, at least in poetry and fiction.

"This comparison between Yiddish and Hebrew has not been made to excite the odium of the Hebraists," he hastens to add. "To my mind there is no room for dispute. The question which language shall have the ascendancy has already been answered. For the past several centuries Yiddish has been the mother tongue of several million Jews; it has shown itself capable of coping with the languages of the nations among whom the Jews were dispersed, while Hebrew has failed. In Palestine, on the other hand, Hebrew has become the mother tongue of thousands of Jews, in spite of their Yiddish ancestry. The problem seems, therefore, to solve itself."

Actually there is no controversy. Each of the two languages has its own territory, and their literatures and their practitioners are so allied that they are really kin-literatures, twin literatures.

As for the disrepute in which Yiddish was held and in some quarters still is held, as a rude, barbarous speech, a medley of dialects, unfit to stand at the side of the scholarly, refined Hebrew, all vital tongues have had to struggle through a rude, formative period. English itself did. Only a little while ago an English scholar could complain that "English has not yet entirely lived down its lowly origin. It was not the vehicle of learning. Latin had been the tongue in which great minds had cast their thoughts, and who wished to learn of them had to acquire their language. For centuries there was no standard English. It was but a group of dialects. It might serve for the common needs of daily life at home. It was well enough for the farm, for the host, upon the seas, or in the folk-moot. So late as the seventeenth century, Bacon and Newton, each having some message to give to men of

learning, the one at the beginning, the other at the end of the century, wrote in Latin, because it was still the one tongue common to all men of learning. *Romeo and Juliet* was not literature to him who wrote it, or to those who saw it on the stage."

Yiddish has to-day established itself as a language in which an important literature has been and is being created. The Yiddish Scientific Institute in Vilna is doing important work. There are Yiddish Faculties in several universities—mostly in Soviet Russia, but also in other countries.

A good deal of Yiddish literature has been translated, and much of it acclaimed. Though unfortunately the translation has not been a systematic process such as the Yiddish P.E.N. Club envisaged a few years ago, when it placed hope in a suggestion of the League of Nations Commission for Intellectual Co-operation, that twenty representative works in each of the less-known literatures should be translated into the three great languages, English, French and German. And many of the translations that have appeared have one grave fault—the translators have tried to give a quaint twist to the work, they have translated natural Yiddish syntax word for word, instead of into natural English syntax, they have translated natural Yiddish idiom verbally instead of into natural English idiom, so that sometimes it reads like a nightmare. There is none of that odd tone in the originals. Even so famous a story as Peretz's *Bontze Schweig* has become acclimatised in English in a strained, stilted sort of way as *Bontze the Silent*, when Schweig, even if it means being silent, is but an ordinary surname that many Jews bear (my friend, the Secretary of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Roumania, and editor of the Bucharest *Curierul Israelit* who has just died, was named Schweig), and the name corresponds best to something like the English name Meek.

But with all the achievements of Yiddish there are warning voices being raised to-day in the Yiddishist camp itself, that point out that the specific Jewish life that produced Yiddish was based on the observance of Jewish religion, that what seem to be national characteristics proceed from the organisation of religious and communal life, and how easy it is for the one to develop into the other is shown by what happened to the Pilgrim Fathers, who went out to serve God in their own way, and in organising their religious and communal life, developed the New England

States. But the impulse was religious. It is the joy of the Sabbath, the congregational services, the Jewish religious observances that penetrate into every home and make every Jew an *active* participant that demanded a mode and a life of their own, the warning voices say, that kept the Jews together. The Yiddish language grew to be what it is, because of the distinctive religious life of the Jews. "Traditional Rabbinic Judaism is a comprehensive religion in the sense that it has given shape and colour to every part of life. Nothing has been too trivial to escape religious regulation or restriction, forming the Jews into a separate community," Dr. Weinreich, the Research Director of the Vilna Yiddish Scientific Institute, has said in tracing the development of Yiddish. In fact, it is Yiddishkeit, not Yiddishism that matters. And to illustrate how strong it still is, one Yiddishist recently reminded us how soon the protests against the suppression of Jewish national autonomy in Lithuania ceased, and asked whether they would have ceased so soon had the Slobodka Yeshiba been suppressed by the Lithuanian Government.

If Jewish religion (and the heritage of Jewish religion, even though one no longer conforms to it) is the base, then surely it is not essential for the Jewish writer to write in either of the two Jewish languages. Besides, "literature, being written in language, is yet something quite distinct," says Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch.

Who would deny Israel Zangwill the right to call himself a Jewish writer, though he wrote in English? Though he himself contends that all such works are "hybrid products, children of mixed marriages." Is Zunz's thought un-Jewish, because he wrote in German? And what about Waldo Frank's feeling that "the ethics of Spinoza, written in Latin and by a man discarded by the Jewish Church ■ nonetheless, so far as I know, the one aesthetic work of that age worthy to have been assimilated by a self-conscious Jewish Community as Jewish art." Though Waldo Frank demands something much more positive ("The so-common Jew who is a Jew because he cannot help it or because he is descended from Jews, or because he is proud of being a Jew—the pride being as a rule no more than compensation for his wounded ego—I call the inertial Jew. As Jews the inertial Jews eventually disintegrate and stink. As Jews they cannot be said to live.

The inertial Jew is a greater menace to the Jews as a race than the Jew who joins the Church. For the poisons or dead matter which the organism excretes are less dangerous than those which remain within the system." : it is reminiscent of the contention we had a little while back about Jewish literature including "every literary production that is the fruit of a Jewish mind, whether it be the scientific work of Maimonides in Arabic, the philosophical treatises of Spinoza in Latin, or the poems of Heine in German."

Are then all Jews writing no matter in what language expressing themselves as Jews, creating Jewish literature ? ■ the mere fact of Jewish birth enough to make a creative worker a Jewish creative worker ? Is it as simple as that ? Is there really such a thing as a specifically Jewish culture that spreads all over the world through all cultures and traditions, and that works through in spite of environment and education and language and common fate and common interest with your fellow-countrymen who are not Jews ?

Writers are descended one from the other. There is a cultural lineage as well as a physical. Is Hitler right when he claims that all Jews working in German art do not rightly belong there, introduce alien, Jewish discords, should go elsewhere and work in the midst of a Jewish culture ? It is the old question again, whether Jews are a nation or a religious community. Jacob Wassermann, who wrote *My Road as German and Jew*, has given much thought to this subject, and he considers himself more German than Hitler. "My forbears have dwelt in Frankish territory for at least 500 years," he says, "and I should like to discover how many of the so-called autochthonous Germans, Saxons, Pomeranians, French-Brandenburgian immigrants could make a similar claim. How many Germans are there who a hundred years ago, fifty years ago, were Slavs, Roumanians, Scandinavians, Celts, and now disfigure Germany's countenance with the bludgeon of Nationalism."

Wassermann feels that in the Jew there remains the "deeper remembrance of the source, something of the hope for the Holy Messiah," but he also feels that he is a German, and essentially a German writer.

Professor Jessner, the great Jewish theatrical producer in Germany, who, too, insists that he ■ a German but belongs to the Jewish religious community, claims that "art depends on the

personality of the artist, and that is the impress of his own soul, and that of his forbears. On top of that there is the ethical value of the religion in which he has been brought up and which he feels."

"I am a German of Jewish origin," is the way Ludwig Fulda, perhaps the most famous of the older German playwrights, and one of the four foundation members of the German Academy of Literature (Gerhart Hauptmann, Thomas Mann and Arno Holz are the others) puts it, "and even if I am as remote from the Jewish Church as from any other I still describe myself of Mosaic faith, for one does not desert a beleaguered fortress."

While even on the other side, Count Keyserling, the founder of the Darmstadt School of Wisdom, Bismarck's son-in-law, and Hitler's philosophical supporter, has just warned the Hitlerists who rave against Einstein, that Einstein, "one of the two or three pioneering spirits of our time, though he is a Jew, yet he is a German."

Berthold Auerbach, who in an earlier generation gave as much thought as Jacob Wassermann to this problem of German and Jew (*Judaism and the New Literature*) summed it up by saying: "We Jews must hold fast to the motto given us by Riesser" (one of the leaders of Jewish emancipation in Germany),

"One Father up above,  
Father of all creatures, He.  
One Mother down below,  
One Motherland, Germany, have we."

It was incidentally a German Jew, Ernst Lissauer, who at the outbreak of the war wrote that fiercely patriotic anti-English hymn of hate that sent all Germany into a frenzy.

And Feuchtwanger only the other day described himself as "a German writer of Jewish extraction, deeply related to the German language and culture, with an urgent desire to go back to Germany as soon as possible."

"For the Jew has heart and hand, our Mother England,  
And they both are thine to-day,"

wrote Alice Lucas, expressing the similar feeling of the English Jew.

"Where in St. Paul does Palestine end, and Rome begin?" asks Waldo Frank. And did not Paul describe himself as "a man who am a Jew," and "we who are Jews by nature"?

But the cry of alien is raised all the same against the Jewish writer. Heine, the one writer of the first rank that Germany produced between the death of Goethe and the coming of the younger men like Hauptmann, about half a century later, has never really been accepted as a German writer. And nearly all the great writers, Wassermann, Schnitzler, von Hoffmannsthal (a baptised Jew, who wrote Reinhardt's *Miracle* and Straus's *Electra* and *Rosenkavalier*), Arnold Zweig, Stefan Zweig, Franz Werfel, Franz Kafka, Max Brod (the objector's own selection) who to-day stand for German literature in the world at large, are repudiated by a large section of the German people. "After all, that there is a difference between the purely German and the Jewish mentality cannot be questioned," one representative of this school of thought explained to English readers recently. "Most Jewish books," it is his grievance, "are filled with fierce and pathetic criticisms of the eternal wrongs of human society. Thus they often create a negative and destructive impression, more than those of Gentile authors." The truth is that these ebullient Germanists object for the same reason to many non-Jewish writers, like Remarque and the Manns, and even Hauptmann himself, and they are now beginning to bundle together everybody in Germany and outside whose political views or artistic methods they do not like, and dub them Jews—Eugene O'Neill, the Capeks, ever so many who have no suspicion of Jewish blood.

And it is Thomas Mann, the non-Jew, who describes Jacob Wassermann, the Jew, as conservative in his art. Though on this point of radicalism and conservatism in art, my boyhood friend Rodker well remarks in his *Future of Futurism* that "it would seem that the best artistic expression has always been equal to itself, that there has been no advance, no retrogression. Futurism exists only as a state of flux, immediately it is accepted becoming the classical of its own generation and of posterity."

Rabbi Meir said, "There may be a new flask full of old wine, and an old flask that has not even new wine in it."

But "like all other classes of human beings, Jews, too, undoubtedly have their specific defects as also their specific virtues," as Arnold Zweig admits.

One of those defects, as an American non-Jewish writer has

seen it in the Jewish writers of America, is the same defect that some Germaniacs see in the Jewish writers in Germany that "they remain alien in America." (In England people still persist in calling Diarraeli the "alien patriot.") "They write like expatriates, with no strong hope of ever reaching any promised land; they are more discontented or distressed than aspiring. They are critical and tend to verge on controversy."

Does the discovery smack of the method of Waldo Frank's *Geneticist* (Waldo Frank happens to be one of those who come under the criticism) "who, having triumphantly discovered that a rotary press will not go without oil, proclaims that oil is the cause of the press and the author and subject of everything it prints"?

But an American Jewish critic, too, has observed a similar tendency—"They have been swept along by the surface currents of their time and have striven to imitate qualities which are not innately theirs unless, indeed, they are Jews through mere accident of birth, and this premise is scientifically unsound. It is more logical to believe that they are exhibiting a surface Jewish tendency, an ability at mimicry and masquerade, a tendency acquired by the Jew of the past for protective reasons."

Of course, the Jew in American literature began with the immigrant novel, picturing the alien Jew, full of hopes, arriving in the land of opportunity and stumbling into the East Side, to suffer disillusion in the sweat-shop (though there had been Emma Lazarus long before the wave of Jewish emigration from Russia swept into America after the pogroms of the 'eighties, who wrote noble poems—one is inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour, and who was praised by Emerson and Whittier). Ab. Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky* is one of the first outstanding books in this genre. For a long time immigrant themes dominated the Jewish writers in America. Mary Antin, Fanny Hurst (who has since gone to pastures new), Anzia Yezierska, three women, were the best at this kind of writing, which in many of its practitioners degenerated into crude sob-stuff. But they mostly revolved round the misunderstood, sensitive, yearning immigrant, painfully struggling with his adjustment problem in alien surroundings. Sometimes he prospered materially and became Americanised, only to discover one day that his children had cut entirely adrift, and his Jewish

past rising before him, he resolutely returned to spiritual isolation or was abandoned to it. For the most part it was highly sentimentalised stuff, casting a glamour over the alien, sympathetically portraying him at odds with a harder, less idealist world, sometimes succumbing to it, more often rising above it. There was poignancy in it, but something alien necessarily went with the glorification of the alien.

A newer school has arisen, with men like Ludwig Lewisohn (who in a different way accentuates "I, the Jew"), Waldo Frank, the playwrights Elmer Rice and George S. Kaufmann, Myron Brinig, Samuel Ornitz, Manuel Komroff and others, who have more grip on their soil, whose America is American, a land found, no longer being groped for.

But German Jews are not immigrants or the sons and grandsons of immigrants. They have lived in Germany for centuries.—"My ancestors have dwelt in Frankish territory for at least 500 years," says Jacob Wassermann. The Central Union of German Citizens of Jewish Faith claims that "from 321 to 1933, for more than 1,600 years, the German Jews have lived on German soil. They feel German. They are German."

And as for other countries, did not Tolstoy say that Jews were more rooted in Russian soil than he, for they had lived there since Byzantine days, from before the beginning of the Christian era, while he was only the great-grandson of a German immigrant? (of the time of Peter the Great). (Apropos of this race theory—of the great men in Russian literature Tolstoy was in origin German, Dostoyevsky Polish, Pushkin Negro, Lermontov Scotch. "It is not true," says Croce, "that poets or other artists are expressions of nationality, race, blood, class, party or anything else of the kind. If poets do not express their national consciousness—if Goethe does not express Germany, Dante Italy, Molière France, Shakespeare England, Cervantes Spain—what do they express? Themselves! They express themselves and in themselves the universe—not Germany, France, Italy—great things, beautiful things, wonderful things, but not great enough to encompass the universe. A poet cannot be judged as a function of nationality.")

Israel Zangwill, who wrote of Jewish immigrant life in England, was never stigmatised as alien. On the contrary, it is precisely three or four of his Jewish tales that have been selected by a discerning critic, not a Jew, as "among the finest in the language."

While a man like Leonard Merrick, is hardly known by most people to be a Jew.

As in everything else, so we find here, too, that a thing may be so, but it may also be the opposite. Hudibras-Butler found that : " Some hold the one, and some the other." For truth does not lie only in one direction. It is everywhere (and there is no break anywhere—immediately midnight strikes we start counting the morning hours. The recitation of the Kriath Shema is limited till midnight. But immediately after midnight " the time has come to recite the Kriath Shema of the morning "). And where all things are, the opposites and contradictions are also. The truth about ourselves is always hard to find. " The eye sees not itself but by reflection."

In presenting this collection of short stories by Jews working in different countries and different languages, I wonder if there really is any unity between them. Sometimes I feel there is. But as I reach to grasp it—" 'Tis here, 'tis here—"Tis gone." Perhaps different readers will come to different conclusions. If I had acted on the advice given to me at one time to run all the stories together according to the names of the authors in alphabetical order, without any dividing line of language or period, Yiddish, English, French, German, Russian, would any clear picture of a Jewish way of writing have emerged, or would there have been just a jumble? Grace Aguilar, Shalom Asch, Berthold Auerbach, Isaac Babel, Hannah Berman, Rabbi Nahman Bratzlav, John Cournot, Disraeli, would it not be as much a jumble as if we shook up say Arziebashoff, Bacon, Boccaccio, Dickens, Frankau, and Goethe, strictly according to alphabetical order?

But I may be wrong. There may be some unifying tendency that runs through all Jewish-born writers and creates a Jewish school of writing, whatever the language, or the Jewish beliefs of the writer, and links together in a common bond, say, Fanny Hurst and Marcel Proust.

Of course, none of the writers represented in this volume have subscribed to anything I have here written. They probably hold very diverse views about the purpose of the book. Some are probably impressed by the " mere listing of Jewish notables," by the array of Jewish writing talent, some by the fact that Jews are here seen doing their part as creative writers, as Jews do their

part in every other field of activity, in every country, some, like Arnold Zweig in a letter to me, consider it important evidence in these Anti-Semitic days that Jews work and achieve honest solid results in literature.

I cannot claim that this work is exhaustive, though I believe it on the whole representative and even comprehensive. Some writers who ought to be in have for technical reasons chiefly been left out. The book would not hold more without becoming unwieldy. Several stories already in print had to be held over for that reason. Not all writers have short stories. Some write only novels, plays, poems, biography, or essays. Some could not be traced in time. A few were not anxious to be included. Even in the Yiddish and Hebrew section there are half a dozen writers who ought to have been in, for whom there was no room, and this section is the largest in the book.

Though it might be mentioned in this regard that the writers in the Yiddish and Hebrew section come from many countries—Russia, Poland, America, Palestine, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, and only two in this collection come from Soviet Russia, though there is a wealth of young talent there, only space would not permit more. In the German section, too, there are writers from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia, who all use German as their literary medium. The solitary Czech in this volume has in the German section several fellow-countrymen, Kompert, Max Brod, Franz Kafka, Franz Werfel. There are many more who wrote and write in German who ought to have been included, and there are some languages not represented in the volume, which with more time and space would have been included. As the book was coming off the press several stories arrived by Jews important in the literatures of their countries, who write in Polish, Hungarian and (in the Argentine) in Spanish. There are Hungarians like Baron Hatvani and Franz Molnar, and in France there are men like Catulle Mendès, Julien Benda, Marcel Schwob, Porto-Riche, Francis de Croisset, Max Jacob and Appolinaire. I have just come across a reference to Jorge Isaacs (1837-1895), the son of an English Jew, described as the greatest writer in the Spanish literature of South America. He was born in Colombia, and his novel *Maria* is claimed as one of the greatest works in modern Spanish literature. And in the Argentine, Albert

Gerchunoff, editor of *La Nacion*, of Buenos Aires, the most important daily newspaper in South America, author of *Gauchos Judios* (Jewish cowboys) which has as theme the life of the early Jewish settlers on the pampas, is described as the leading Spanish literary critic and authority in South America. In Scandinavia there are Oscar Levertin, Sophie Elkan, Jacob Goldschmidt, Henri Nathansen. And the death, as I write this, of Isaac Ferrara in Constantinople reminds me that there are Jews in Turkish literature, and that the late Chief Rabbi of Turkey, Chaim Bejerano Effendi, who died in 1932, was eulogised by Shukru Bey, a member of the Government, as "one of the greatest authorities on the Turkish language and literature."

Altogether there is material for a second volume, if this succeeds sufficiently to tempt the publishers to another. It is also not always possible to convey the quality of a writer by one short story, and in this respect, too, there is room for a further volume.

I have endeavoured wherever possible to have the stories short rather than "long-short," but in a few cases this has been impossible. Though I hope I have avoided the potted novel, *Elixir of Dickens*, *Otto of Oliver*. The short story is a distinctive form of literature. "Only the fastidious," said Anatole France, a prince of short-story writers, "is able to savour the excellence of a short story, while the gluttonous devour novels indifferently, good, middling or bad. The short story is sufficient for all ends. A great deal of meaning can be contained in a few words. A well-constructed short story is the delight of the connoisseur. It is an elixir, a quintessence, a precious ointment."

But as I have already said, fiction-writing is not the only form of writing. I came across an American critic recently who expressed "surprise that Jews take preponderantly to the fiction form of writing; their adventures into the concrete, more cerebral realms" he found "limited," with "a great disparity between the number of Jewish novelists and essayists." I remember, however, that Henley, writing not of Jews, said that "it is our misfortune that of good essayists there should be few." Besides Israel Zangwill did some of his finest work in the essay form. His brother, Louis Zangwill, ■ at his best in the "more cerebral realms." Ludwig Lewisohn, Waldo Frank and others in America do important critical work. Most of the fiction writers think about their problems and write about them, and some of them think and

write more clearly than those who write exclusively of problems. Jacob Wassermann, the Zweigs, Werfel, Doebelin, Jean Richard Bloch, Benjamin Crémieux, Frishman, Peretz all have essays that rank as high as their fiction.

I have to acknowledge gratefully the assistance given to me by many people without whom my task would have been very much harder. Mr. Cooper of the Unicorn Press and John Heritage has always been very helpful and accommodating. The Yiddish P.E.N. Club and its Secretary, my old friend Ravitch, made it possible for the Yiddish section to be as comprehensive as it is. Some of the authors were extremely kind and gave me much assistance. Arnold Zweig must be particularly mentioned in this connection. I must thank also my fellow-translators (most of the stories were specially translated for this volume), Mr. Lask, Miss Berman, Mr. van Son, Mr. Heer, Mr. Selver, Mr. Jopson, Miss Kennedy, Miss Lask, Miss Fowler, Mr. Cachia, and many others, particularly Mr. Lisky, and my wife (my volunteer typist), who have been very helpful to me.

And since I have struck the personal note, I cannot pass on without a reference to a great sorrow with which this book will ever remain associated in my memory. In the midst of my work on it my mother died, suddenly, while apparently in complete health, fell dead while cheerfully going about her household duties. She was to me the embodiment of loveliness and lovingness. For many weeks the book was held up because I could not go on working at anything. And in constant thought of her it was eventually completed. To me her memory will always be bound up with it.

To its readers, whatever the book will demonstrate, and to those who do not desire to ponder the Jewish question, I believe that the collection will justify itself as reading matter. And if it demonstrates nothing, it will but the more justify the verse I have placed at the head of this foreword.

" You have lain with me, and these,  
Your children are mine, too.  
Instead of conquering me,  
You have my blood in you."



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## IXION IN HEAVEN

*By* BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Benjamin Disraeli, born in London, 1804, died 1881. Descended from a wealthy family of Spanish Jews. Was baptised by his father when he was thirteen, immediately after the death of his grandfather. Entered politics, and became Conservative leader and Prime Minister, and one of the great statesmen of the British Empire.

Though officially a Christian, he retained a strong sense of Jewishness, and constantly boasted of his Jewish origin and traditions.

Froude writes that "it would be wrong to say that Disraeli had no sincere religious convictions. He was a Hebrew to the heart of him. He accepted the Hebrew tradition as a true account of the world, and of man's place in it. He was nominally a member of the Church of England, but his Christianity was something of his own, and his creed, as sketched in his 'Life of Lord George Bentinck,' would scarcely find acceptance in any Christian community."

His most important works in literature are "Coningsby," "Sybil," "Tancred," and "Alroy."

"Ixion in Heaven" is described by Froude as "one of the most brilliant of all his productions. No characters in real life are more vivid than those which he draws of the highbred divinities at the court of the Father of the Gods, while the Father himself is George IV, Apollo Byron, and the ladies well-known ornaments of the circles of the Olympians of Mayfair. Here we have his real mind, and matter, style and manner are equally admirable."

### PART I

#### I

THE thunder groaned, the wind howled, the rain fell in hissing torrents, impenetrable darkness covered the earth.

A blue and forky flash darted a momentary light over the landscape. A Doric temple rose in the centre of a small and verdant plain, surrounded on all sides by green and hanging woods.

"Jove is my only friend," exclaimed a wanderer, as he muffled himself up in his mantle; "and were it not for the porch of his temple, this night, methinks, would complete the work of my loving wife and my dutiful subjects."

The thunder died away, the wind sank into silence, the rain ceased, and the parting clouds exhibited the glittering crescent of the young moon. A sonorous and majestic voice sounded from the skies :

" Who art thou that hast no other friend than Jove ? "

" One whom all mankind unite in calling a wretch. "

" Art thou a philosopher ? "

" If philosophy be endurance. But for the rest, I was sometime a king, and am now a scatterling. "

" How do they call thee ? "

" Ixion of Thessaly. "

" Ixion of Thessaly ! I thought he was a happy man. I heard that he was just married. "

" Father of Gods and men ! for I deem thee such, Thessaly is not Olympus. Conjugal felicity is only the portion of the Immortals ! "

" Hem !—What ! was Dia jealous, which is common—or false, which is commoner—or both, which is commonest ? "

" It may be neither. We quarrelled about nothing. Where there is little sympathy, or too much, the splitting of a straw is plot enough for a domestic tragedy. I was careless, her friends stigmatised me as callous ; she cold, her friends styled her magnanimous. Public opinion was all on her side, merely because I did not choose that the world should interfere between me and my wife. Dia took the world's advice upon every point, and the world decided that she always acted rightly. However, life is life, either in a palace or a cave. I am glad you ordered it to leave off thundering. "

" A cool dog this.—And Dia left thee ? "

" No ; I left her. "

" What, craven ? "

" Not exactly. The truth is—'tis a long story. I was over head and ears in debt. "

" Ah ! that accounts for everything. Nothing is so harassing as a want of money. But what lucky fellows you Mortals are with your *post-obits* ! We Immortals are deprived of this resource. I was obliged to get up a rebellion against my father, because he kept me so short, and could not die. "

" You could have married for money. I did. "

" I had no opportunity, there was so little female society in those days. When I came out, there were no heiresses except the

Parcæ, confirmed old maids ; and no very rich dowager, except my grandmother, old Terra."

"Just the thing ; the older the better. However, I married Dia, the daughter of Deioncus, with a prodigious portion ; but after the ceremony, the old gentleman would not fulfil his part of the contract without me giving up my stud. Can you conceive anything more unreasonable ? I smothered my resentment at the time ; for the truth is, my tradesmen all renewed my credit on the strength of the match, and so we went on very well for a year ; but at last they began to smell a rat, and grew importunate. I entreated Dia to interfere ; but she was a paragon of daughters, and always took the side of her father. If she had only been dutiful to her husband, she would have been a perfect woman. At last I invited Deioncus to the Larissa races, with the intention of conciliating him. The unprincipled old man bought the horse that I had backed, and by which I intended to have redeemed my fortunes, and withdrew it. My book was ruined. I dissembled my rage. I dug a pit in our garden, and filled it with burning coals. As my father-in-law and myself were taking a stroll after dinner, the worthy Deioncus fell in, merely by accident. Dia proclaimed me as the murderer of her father, and, as a satisfaction to her wounded feelings, earnestly requested her subjects to decapitate her husband. She certainly was the best of daughters. There was no withstanding public opinion, an infuriated rabble, and a magnanimous wife at the same time. They surrounded my palace : I cut my way through the greasy-capped multitude, sword in hand, and gained a neighbouring Court, where I solicited my brother princes to purify me from the supposed murder. If I had only murdered a subject, they would have supported me against the people ; but Deioncus being crowned head, like themselves, they declared they would not countenance so immoral a being as his son-in-law. And so, at length, after much wandering, and shunned by all my species, I am here, Jove, in much higher society than I ever expected to mingle."

"Well, thou art a frank dog, and in a sufficiently severe scrape. The Gods must have pity on those for whom men have none. It is evident that Earth is too hot for thee at present, so I think thou hadst better come and stay a few weeks with us in Heaven."

"Take my thanks for hecatombs, great Jove. Thou art, indeed, a God !"

"I hardly know whether our life will suit you. We dine at sunset; for Apollo is so much engaged, that he cannot join us sooner, and no dinner goes off well without him. In the morning you are your own master, and must find amusement where you can. Diana will show you some tolerable sport. Do you shoot?"

"No arrow surer. Fear not for me, Ægiachus: I am always at home. But how am I get to to you?"

"I'll send Mercury; he is the best travelling companion in the world. What, ho! my Eagle!"

The clouds joined, and darkness again fell over the earth.

## II

"So! tread softly. Don't be nervous. Are you sick?"

"A little nausea; 'tis nothing."

"The novelty of the motion. The best thing is a beef-steak. We will stop at Taurus and take one."

"You have been a great traveller, Mercury?"

"I have seen the world."

"Ah! a wondrous spectacle. I long to travel."

"The same thing over and over again. Little novelty and much change. I am wearied with exertion, and if I could get a pension would retire."

"And yet travel brings wisdom."

"It cures us of care. Seeing much we feel little, and learn how very petty are all those great affairs which cost us such anxiety."

"I feel that already myself. Floating in this blue aether, what the devil is my wife to me, and her dirty earth! My persecuting enemies seem so many pismires; and as for my debts, which have occasioned me so many brooding moments, honour and infamy, credit and beggary, seem to me alike ridiculous."

"Your mind is opening, Ixion. You will soon be a man of the world. To the left, and keep clear of that star."

"Who lives there?"

"The Fates know, not I. Some low people who are trying to shine into notice. 'Tis a parvenu planet, and only sprung up into space within this century. We don't visit them."

"Poor devils! I feel hungry."

"All right. We shall get into heaven by the first dinner bolt. You cannot arrive at a strange house at a better moment. We shall just have time to dress. I would not spoil my appetite by luncheon. Jupiter keeps a capital cook."

"I have heard of Nectar and Ambrosia."

"Poh! nobody touches them. They are regular old-fashioned celestial food, and merely put upon the side-table. Nothing goes down in Heaven now but infernal cookery. We took our *chef* from Proserpine."

"Were you ever in Hell?"

"Several times. 'Tis the fashion now among the Olympians to pass the winter there."

"Is this the season in Heaven?"

"Yes; you are lucky. Olympus is quite full."

"It was very kind of Jupiter to invite me."

"Ah! he has his good points. And, no doubt, he has taken a liking to you, which is all very well. But be upon your guard. He has no heart, and is as capricious as he is tyrannical."

"Gods cannot be more unkind to me than men have been."

"All those who have suffered think they have seen the worst. A great mistake. However, you are now in the high road to preferment, so we will not be dull. There are some good fellows enough amongst us. You will like old Neptune."

"He is there now?"

"Yes, he generally passes his summer with us. There is little stirring in the ocean at that season."

"I am anxious to see Mars."

"Oh! a brute, more a bully than a hero. Not at all in the best set. These mustachioed gentry are by no means the rage at present in Olympus. The women are all literary now, and Minerva has quite eclipsed Venus. Apollo is our hero. You must read his last work."

"I hate reading."

"So do I. I have no time, and seldom do anything in that way but glance at a newspaper. Study and action will not combine."

"I suppose I shall find the Goddesses very proud?"

"You will find them as you find women below, of different dispositions with the same object. Venus is a flirt; Minerva a prude, who fancies she has a correct taste and a strong mind; and

Juno a politician. As for the rest, faint heart never won fair lady, take a friendly hint, and don't be alarmed."

"I fear nothing. My mind mounts with my fortunes. We are above the clouds. They form beneath us a vast and snowy region, dim and irregular, as I have sometimes seen them clustering upon the horizon's ridge at sunset, like a raging sea stilled by some sudden supernatural frost and frozen into form! How bright the air above us, and how delicate its fragrant breath! I scarcely breathe, and yet my pulses beat like my first youth. I hardly feel my being. A splendour falls upon your presence. You seem, indeed, a God! Am I so glorious? This—this is Heaven!"

### III

The travellers landed on a vast flight of sparkling steps of lapis-lazuli. Ascending, they entered beautiful gardens; winding walks that yielded to the feet, and accelerated your passage by their rebounding pressure; fragrant shrubs covered with dazzling flowers, the fleeting tints of which changed every moment, groups of tall trees with strange birds of brilliant and variegated plumage, singing and reposing in their sheeny foliage, and fountains of perfumes.

Before them rose an illimitable and golden palace, with high spreading domes of pearl, and long windows of crystal. Around the huge portal of ruby was ranged a company of winged genii, who smiled on Mercury as he passed them with his charge.

"The father of Gods and men is dressing," said the Son of Maia. "I shall attend his toilet and inform him of your arrival. These are your rooms. Dinner will be ready in half an hour. I will call for you as I go down. You can be formally presented in the evening. At that time, inspired by liqueurs and his matchless band of wind instruments, you will agree with the world that Ægiocbus is the most finished God in existence."

### IV

"Now, Ixion, are you ready?"

"Even so. What says Jove?"

"He smiled, but said nothing. He was trying on a new robe. By this time he is seated. Hark! the thunder. Come on!"

They entered a cupolaed hall. Seats of ivory and gold were ranged round a circular table of cedar, inlaid with the campaigns against the Titans, in silver exquisitely worked, a nuptial present of Vulcan. The service of gold plate threw all the ideas of the King of Thessaly as to royal magnificence into the darkest shade. The enormous plateau represented the constellations. Ixion viewed the father of Gods and men with great interest, who, however, did not notice him. He acknowledged the majesty of that countenance whose nod shook Olympus. Majestically robust and luxuriantly lusty, his tapering waist was evidently immortal, for it defied Time, and his splendid auburn curls, parted on his forehead with celestial precision, descended over cheeks glowing with the purple radiancy of perpetual manhood.

The haughty Juno was seated on his left hand and Ceres on his right. For the rest of the company there was Neptune, Latona, Minerva, and Apollo, and when Mercury and Ixion had taken their places, one seat was still vacant.

"Where is Diana?" inquired Jupiter, with a frown.

"My sister is hunting," said Apollo.

"She is always too late for dinner," said Jupiter. "No habit is less Goddess-like."

"Godlike pursuits cannot be expected to induce Goddess-like manners," said Juno, with a sneer.

"I have no doubt Diana will be here directly," said Latona, mildly.

Jupiter seemed pacified, and at that instant the absent guest returned.

"Good sport, Di?" inquired Neptune.

"Very fair, uncle. Mamma," continued the sister of Apollo, addressing herself to Juno, whom she ever thus styled when she wished to conciliate her—"I have brought you a new peacock."

Juno was fond of pets, and was conciliated by the present.

"Bacchus made a great noise about this wine, Mercury," said Jupiter, "but I think with little cause. What think you?"

"It pleases me, but I am fatigued, and then all wine is agreeable."

"You have had a long journey," replied the Thunderer. "Ixion, I am glad to see you in Heaven."

"Your Majesty arrived to-day?" inquired Minerva, to whom the King of Thessaly sat next.

"Within this hour."

"You must leave off talking of Time now," said Minerva, with a severe smile. "Pray is there anything new in Greece?"

"I have not been at all in society lately."

"No new edition of Homer? I admire him exceedingly."

"All about Greece interests me," said Apollo, who, although handsome, was a somewhat melancholy lackadaisical-looking personage, with his shirt collar thrown open, and his long curls very theatrically arranged. "All about Greece interests me. I always consider Greece my peculiar property. My best poems were written at Delphi. I travelled in Greece when I was very young. I envy mankind."

"Indeed!" said Ixion.

"Yes: they at least can look forward to a termination of the ennui of existence, but for us Celestials there is no prospect. Say what they like, Immortality is a bore."

"You eat nothing, Apollo," said Ceres.

"Nor drink," said Neptune.

"To eat, to drink, what is it but to live; and what is life but death, if death be that which all men deem it, a thing insufferable, and to be shunned. I refresh myself now only with soda-water and biscuits. Ganymede, give me some."

Now, although the *cuisine* of Olympus was considered perfect, the forlorn poet had unfortunately fixed upon the only two articles which were not comprised in its cellar or larder. In Heaven, there was neither soda-water nor biscuits. A great confusion consequently ensued; but at length the bard, whose love of fame was only equalled by his horror of getting fat, consoled himself with a swan stuffed with truffles, and a bottle of strong Tenedos wine.

"What do you think of Homer?" inquired Minerva of Apollo.

"Is he not delightful?"

"If you think so."

"Nay, I am desirous of your opinion."

"Then you should not have given me yours, for your taste is too fine for me to dare to differ with it."

"I have suspected, for some time, that you are rather a heretic."

"Why, the truth is," replied Apollo, playing with his rings, "I do not think much of Homer. Homer was not esteemed in his

## IXION IN HEAVEN

own age, and our contemporaries are generally our b  
The fact is, there are very few people who are qualified upon matters of taste. A certain set, for certain reasons, to cry up a certain writer, and the great mass soon join in. All is cant. And the present admiration of Homer is not less so. They say I have borrowed a great deal from him. The truth is, I never read Homer since I was a child, and I thought of him then what I think of him now, a writer of some wild irregular power, totally deficient in taste. Depend upon it, our contemporaries are our best judges, and his contemporaries decided that Homer was nothing. A great poet cannot be kept down. Look at my case. Maryas said of my first volume that it was pretty good poetry for a God, and in answer I wrote a satire, and flayed Maryas alive. But what is poetry and what is criticism, and what is life? Air. And what is Air? Do you know? I don't. All is mystery, and all is gloom, and ever and anon from out the clouds a star breaks forth, and glitters, and that star is Poetry."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Minerva.

"I do not exactly understand you," said Neptune.

"Have you heard from Proserpine, lately?" inquired Jupiter of Ceres.

"Yesterday," said the domestic mother. "They talk of soon joining us. But Pluto is at present so busy, owing to the amazing quantity of wars going on now, that I am almost afraid he will scarcely be able to accompany her."

Juno exchanged a telegraphic nod with Ceres. The Goddesses rose, and retired.

"Come, old boy," said Jupiter to Ixion, instantly throwing off all his chivalric majesty, "I drink your welcome in a magnum of Maraschino. Damn your poetry, Apollo, and, Mercury, give us one of your good stories."

## V

"Well! what do you think of him?" asked Juno.

"He appears to have a very fine mind," said Minerva.

"Poh! he has very fine eyes," said Juno.

"He seems a very nice, quiet young gentleman," said Ceres.

"I have no doubt he is very amiable," said Latona.

"He must have felt very strange," said Diana.

## VII

Ganymede announced coffee in the saloon of Juno. Jupiter was in superb good humour. He was amused by his mortal guest. He had condescended to tell one of his best stories in his best style, about Leda, not too scandalous, but gay.

"Those were bright days," said Neptune.

"We can remember," said the Thunderer, with a twinkling eye. "These youths have fallen upon duller times. There are no fine women now. Ixion, I drink to the health of your wife."

"With all my heart, and may we never be nearer than we are at present."

"Good ! i'faith ; Apollo, your arm. Now for the ladies. La, la, la, la ! la, la, la, la !"

## VIII

The Thunderer entered the saloon of Juno with that bow which no God could rival ; all rose, and the King of Heaven seated himself between Ceres and Latona. The melancholy Apollo stood apart, and was soon carried off by Minerva to an assembly at the house of Mnemosyne. Mercury chatted with the Graces, and Bacchus with Diana. The three Muses favoured the company with singing, and the Queen of Heaven approached Ixion.

"Does your Majesty dance ?" she haughtily inquired.

"On earth ; I have few accomplishments even there, and none in Heaven."

"You have led a strange life ! I have heard of your adventures."

"A king who has lost his crown may generally gain at least experience."

"Your courage is firm."

"I have felt too much to care for much. Yesterday I was a vagabond exposed to every pitiless storm, and now I am the guest of Jove. While there is life there is hope, and he who laughs ■ Destiny will gain Fortune. I would go through the past again to enjoy the present, and feel that, after all, I am my wife's debtor, since, through her conduct, I can gaze upon you."

"No great spectacle. If that be all, I wish you better fortune."

"I desire no greater."

"You are moderate."

"I am perhaps more unreasonable than you imagine."

"Indeed!"

• Their eyes met; the dark orbs of the Thessalian did not quail before the flashing vision of the Goddess. Juno grew pale. Juno turned away.

## PART II

### I

Mercury and Ganymede were each lolling on an opposite couch in the ante-chamber of Olympus.

"It is wonderful," said the Son of Maia, yawning.

"It is incredible," rejoined the cup-bearer of Jove, stretching his legs.

"A miserable mortal!" exclaimed the God, elevating his eyebrows.

"A vile Thessalian!" said the beautiful Phrygian, shrugging his shoulders.

"Not three days back an outcast among his own wretched species!"

"And now commanding everybody in Heaven."

"He shall not command me, though," said Mercury.

"Will he not?" replied Ganymede. "Why, what do you think?—only last night—hark! here he comes."

The companions jumped up from their couches—a light laugh was heard. The cedar portal was flung open, and Ixion lounged in, habited in a loose morning robe, and kicking before him one of his slippers.

"Ah!" exclaimed the King of Thessaly, "the very fellows I wanted to see! Ganymede, bring me some nectar; and, Mercury, run and tell Jove that I shall not dine at home to-day."

The messenger and the page exchanged looks of indignant consternation.

"Well! what are you waiting for?" continued Ixion, looking round from the mirror in which he was arranging his locks. The messenger and the page disappeared.

"So! this is Heaven," exclaimed the husband of Dia, flinging himself upon one of the couches, "and a very pleasant place too. These worthy Immortals required their minds to be opened, and I trust I have effectually performed the necessary operation. They wanted to keep me down with their dull old-fashioned celestial airs, but I fancy I have given them change for their talent. To make your way in Heaven you must command. These exclusives sink under the audacious invention of an aspiring mind. Jove himself is really a fine old fellow, with some notions too. I am a prime favourite, and no one is greater authority with Ægiochus on all subjects, from the character of the fair sex or the pedigree of a courser, down to the cut of a robe or the flavour of a dish. Thanks, Ganymede," continued the Thessalian, as he took the goblet from his returning attendant.

"I drink to your *bonnes fortunes*. Splendid! This nectar makes me feel quite immortal. By-the-bye, I hear sweet sounds. Who is in the Hall of Music?"

"The Goddesses, royal sir, practise a new air of Euterpe, the words by Apollo. 'Tis pretty, and will doubtless be very popular, for it is all about moonlight and the misery of existence."

"I warrant it."

"You have a taste for poetry yourself?" inquired Ganymede.

"Not the least," replied Ixion.

"Apollo," continued the heavenly page, "is a great genius, though Marsyas said that he never would be a poet because he was a god, and had no heart. But do you think, sir, that a poet does indeed need a heart?"

"I really cannot say. I know my wife always said I had a bad heart and worse head, but what she meant, upon my honour I never could understand."

"Minerva will ask you to write in her album."

"Will she indeed! I am very sorry to hear it, for I can scarcely

scrawl my own signature. I should think that Jove himself cared little for all this nonsense."

"Jove loves an epigram. He does not esteem Apollo's works at all. Jove is of the classical school, and admires satire, provided there be no allusions to gods and kings."

"Of course; I quite agree with him. I remember we had a confounded poet at Larissa who proved my family lived before the deluge, and asked me for a pension. I refused him, and then he wrote an epigram asserting that I sprang from the veritable stones thrown by Deucalion and Pyrrha at the re-peopling of the earth and retained all the properties of my ancestors."

"Ha, ha! Hark! there's a thunderbolt! I must run to Jove."

"And I will look in on the musicians. This way, I think."

"Up the ruby staircase—Turn to your right, down the amethyst gallery—Farewell."

"Good-bye;—a lively lad that!"

## II

The King of Thessaly entered the Hall of Music with its golden walls and crystal dome. The Queen of Heaven was reclining in an easy chair, cutting out peacocks in small sheets of note paper. Minerva was making a pencil observation on a manuscript copy of the song: Apollo listened with deference to her laudatory criticisms. Another divine dame, standing by the side of Euterpe, who was seated by the harp, looked up as Ixion entered. The wild liquid glance of her soft but radiant countenance denoted the famed Goddess of Beauty.

Juno just acknowledged the entrance of Ixion by a slight and very haughty inclination of the head, and then resumed her employment. Minerva asked him his opinion of her amendment, of which he greatly approved. Apollo greeted him with a melancholy smile, and congratulated him on being mortal. Venus complimented him on his visit to Olympus, and expressed the pleasure that she experienced in making his acquaintance.

"What do you think of Heaven?" inquired Venus in a soft still voice, and with a smile like summer lightning.

"I never found it so enchanting as at this moment," replied Ixion.

"A little dull? For myself, I pass my time chiefly at Cnidos:

you must come and visit me there. 'Tis the most charming place in the world. 'Tis said, you know, that our onions are like other people's roses. We will take care of you, if your wife come."

"No fear of that. She always remains at home and piques herself on her domestic virtues, which means pickling, and quarrelling with her husband."

"Ah! I see you are a droll. Very good indeed. Well, for my part, I like a watering-place existence. Cnidos, Paphos, Cythera—you will usually find me at one of these places. I like the easy distraction of a career without any visible result. At these fascinating spots your gloomy race, to whom, by-the-bye, I am exceedingly partial, appear emancipated from the wearing fetters of their regular, dull, orderly, methodical, moral, political, toiling existence. I pride myself upon being the Goddess of Watering-places. You really must pay me a visit at Cnidos."

"Such an invitation requires no repetition. And Cnidos is your favourite spot?"

"Why, it was so; but of late it has become so inundated with invalid Asiatics and valetudinarian Persians, that the simultaneous influx of the handsome heroes who swarm in from the islands to look after their daughters, scarcely compensates for the annoying presence of their yellow faces, and shaking limbs. No, I think, on the whole, Paphos is my favourite."

"I have heard of its magnificent luxury."

"Oh! 'tis lovely! Quite my idea of country life. Not a single tree! When Cyprus is very hot, you run to Paphos for a sea-breeze, and are sure to meet every one whose presence is in the least desirable. All the bores remain behind, as if by instinct."

"I remember when we married, we talked of passing the honeymoon at Cythera, but Dia would have her waiting-maid and a band-box stuffed between us in the chariot, so I got sulky after the first stage, and returned by myself."

"You were quite right. I hate band-boxes: they are always in the way. You would have liked Cythera if you had been in the least in love. High rocks and green knolls, bowery woods, winding walks, and delicious sunsets. I have not been there much of late," continued the Goddess, looking somewhat sad and serious, "since—but I will not talk sentiment to Ixion."

"Do you think, then, I am insensible?"

"Perhaps you are right. We Mortals grow callous."

"So I have heard. How very odd!" So saying, the Goddess glided away and saluted Mars, who at that moment entered the hall. Ixion was presented to the military hero, who looked fierce and bowed stiffly. The King of Thessaly turned upon his heel. Minerva opened her album, and invited him to inscribe a stanza.

"Goddess of Wisdom," replied the King, "unless you inspire me, the virgin page must remain pure as thyself. I can scarcely sign a decree."

"Is it Ixion of Thessaly who says this—one who has seen so much, and, if I am not mistaken, has felt and thought so much? I can easily conceive why such a mind may desire to veil its movements from the common herd, but pray concede to Minerva the gratifying compliment of assuring her that she is the exception for whom this rule has been established."

"I seem to listen to the inspired music of an oracle. Give me a pen."

"Here is one, plucked from a sacred owl."

"So! I write.—There! Will it do?"

Minerva read the inscription:

I HAVE SEEN THE WORLD, AND MORE THAN THE WORLD: I HAVE  
STUDIED THE HEART OF MAN, AND NOW I CONSORT WITH IMMORTALS.  
THE FRUIT OF MY TREE OF KNOWLEDGE IS PLUCKED, AND IT IS THIS,  
"Adventures are to the Adventurous."

*Written in the Album of Minerva, by*

**Ixion in Heaven.**

"'Tis brief," said the Goddess, with a musing air, "but full of meaning. You have a daring soul and pregnant mind."

"I have dared much: what I may produce we have yet to see."

"I must to Jove," said Minerva, "to council. We shall meet again. Farewell, Ixion."

"Farewell, Glaucopis."

The King of Thessaly stood away from the remaining guests, and leant with folded arms and pensive brow against a wreathed column. Mars listened to Venus with an air of deep devotion. Euterpe played an inspiring accompaniment to their conversation. The Queen of Heaven seemed engrossed in the creation of her paper peacocks.

Ixion advanced and seated himself on a couch near Juno. His

manner was divested of that reckless bearing and careless coolness by which it was in general distinguished. He was, perhaps, even a little embarrassed. His ready tongue deserted him. At length he spoke.

"Has your Majesty ever heard of the peacock of the Queen of Mesopotamia?"

"No," replied Juno, with stately reserve; and then she added with an air of indifferent curiosity, "Is it in any way remarkable?"

"Its breast is of silver, its wings of gold, its eyes of carbuncle, its claws of amethyst."

"And its tail?" eagerly inquired Juno.

"That is a secret," replied Ixion. "The tail is the most wonderful part of all."

"Oh! tell me, pray tell me!"

"I forget."

"No, no, no; it is impossible!" exclaimed the animated Juno. "Provoking mortal!" continued the Goddess. "Let me entreat you; tell me immediately."

"There is a reason which prevents me."

"What can it be? How very odd! What reason can it possibly be? Now tell me; as a particular, a personal favour, I request you, do tell me."

"What! The tail or the reason? The tail is wonderful, but the reason is much more so. I can only tell one. Now choose."

"What provoking things these human beings are! The tail is wonderful, but the reason is much more so. Well then, the reason—no, the tail. Stop, now, as a particular favour, pray tell me both. What can the tail be made of, and what can the reason be? I am literally dying of curiosity."

"Your Majesty has cut out that peacock wrong," coolly remarked Ixion. "It is more like one of Minerva's owls."

"Who cares about paper peacocks, when the Queen of Mesopotamia has got such a miracle!" exclaimed Juno; and she tore the labours of the morning to pieces, and threw away the fragments with vexation. "Now tell me instantly—if you have the slightest regard for me, tell me instantly. What was the tail made of?"

"And you do not wish to hear the reason?"

"That afterwards. Now! I am all ears." At this moment Ganymede entered, and whispered the Goddess, who rose in evident vexation, and retired to the presence of Jove,

III

The King of Thessaly quitted the Hall of Music. Moody, yet not uninfluenced by a degree of wild excitement, he wandered forth into the gardens of Olympus. He came to a beautiful green retreat surrounded by enormous cedars, so vast that it seemed they must have been coeval with the creation ; so fresh and brilliant, you would have deemed them wet with the dew of their first spring. The turf, softer than down, and exhaling, as you pressed it, an exquisite perfume, invited him to recline himself upon this natural couch. He threw himself upon the aromatic herbage, and leaning on his arm, fell into a deep reverie.

Hours flew away ; the sunshiny glades that opened in the distance had softened into shade.

" Ixion, how do you do ? " inquired a voice, wild, sweet, and thrilling as a bird. The King of Thessaly started and looked up with the distracted air of a man roused from a dream, or from complacent meditation over some strange, sweet secret. His cheek was flushed—his dark eyes flashed fire ; his brow trembled—his dishevelled hair played in the fitful breeze. The King of Thessaly looked up, and beheld a most beautiful youth.

Apparently, he had attained about the age of puberty. His stature, however, was rather tall for his age, but exquisitely moulded and proportioned. Very fair, his somewhat round cheeks were tinged with a rich but delicate glow, like the rose of twilight, and lighted by dimples that twinkled like stars. His large and deep-blue eyes sparkled with exultation, and an air of ill-suppressed mockery quivered round his pouting lips. His light auburn air, braided off his white forehead, clustered in massy curls on each side of his face, and fell in sunny torrents down his neck. And from the back of the beautiful youth there fluttered forth two wings, the tremulous plumage of which seemed to have been bathed in a sunset—so various, so radiant, and so novel were its shifting and wondrous tints :—purple, and crimson, and gold ; streaks of azure—dashes of orange and glossy black ;—now a single feather, whiter than light, and sparkling like the frost, stars of emerald and carbuncle, and then the prismatic blaze of an enormous brilliant ! A quiver hung at the side of the beautiful youth, and he leant upon a bow.

" Oh ! god—for god thou must be ! " at length exclaimed Ixion.  
 " Do I behold the bright divinity of Love ? "

"I am indeed Cupid," replied the youth; "and am very curious to know what Ixion ■ thinking about."

"Thought is often bolder than speech."

"Oracular, though a mortal! You need not be afraid to trust me. My aid I am sure you must need. Who ever was found in a reverie on the green turf, under the shade of spreading trees, without requiring the assistance of Cupid? Come! be frank—who is the heroine? Some love-sick nymph deserted on the far earth; or worse, some treacherous mistress, whose frailty is more easily forgotten than her charms? 'Tis a miserable situation, no doubt. It cannot be your wife?"

"Assuredly not," replied Ixion, with great energy.

"Another man's?"

"No."

"What! an obdurate maiden?"

Ixion shook his head.

"It must be a widow, then," continued Cupid. "Who ever heard before of such a piece of work about a widow!"

"Have pity upon me, dread Cupid!" exclaimed the King of Thessaly, rising suddenly from the ground, and falling on his knee before the God. "Thou art the universal friend of man, and all nations alike throw their incense on thy altars. Thy divine discrimination has not deceived thee. I *am* in love;—desperately—madly—fatally enamoured. The object of my passion is neither my own wife nor another man's. In spite of all they have said and sworn, I am a moral member of society. She is neither a maid nor a widow. She is——"

"What? what?" exclaimed the impatient deity.

"A Goddess!" replied the King.

"Wheugh!" whistled Cupid. "What! has my mischievous mother been indulging you with an innocent flirtation?"

"Yes; but it produced no effect upon me."

"You have a stout heart, then. Perhaps you have been reading poetry with Minerva, and are caught in one of her Platonic man-traps."

"She set one, but I broke away."

"You have a stout leg, then. But where are you—where are you? ■ it Hebe?—It can hardly be Diana, she is so very cold. Is it a Muse, or is it one of the Graces?"

Ixion again shook his head.

"Come, my dear fellow," said Cupid, quite in a confidential tone, "you have told enough to make further reserve mere affectation. Ease your heart at once, and ■ I can assist you depend upon my exertions."

"Beneficent God!" exclaimed Ixion, "if I ever return to Larissa, the brightest temple in Greece shall hail thee for its inspiring deity. I address thee with all the confiding frankness of a devoted votary. Know, then, the heroine of my reverie was no less a personage than the Queen of Heaven herself!"

"Juno! by all that is sacred!" shouted Cupid.

"I am here," responded a voice of majestic melody. The stately form of the Queen of Heaven advanced from a neighbouring bower. Ixion stood with his eyes fixed upon the ground, with a throbbing heart and burning cheeks. Juno stood motionless, pale, and astounded. The God of Love burst into excessive laughter.

"A pretty pair," he exclaimed, fluttering between both, and laughing in their faces. "Truly a pretty pair. Well! I see I am in your way. Good-bye!" And so saying, the God pulled a couple of arrows from his quiver, and with the rapidity of lightning, shot one in the respective breasts of the Queen of Heaven and the King of Thessaly.

#### IV

The amethystine twilight of Olympus died away. The stars blazed with tints of every hue. Ixion and Juno returned to the palace. She leant upon his arm;—her eyes were fixed upon the ground;—they were in sight of the gorgeous pile, and yet she had not spoken. Ixion, too, was silent, and gazed with abstraction upon the glowing sky.

Suddenly, when within a hundred yards of the portal, Juno stopped, and looking up into the face of Ixion with an irresistible smile, she said, "I am sure you cannot now refuse to tell me what the Queen of Mesopotamia's peacock's tail was made of?"

"It is impossible now," said Ixion. "Know, then, beautiful Goddess, that the tail of the Queen of Mesopotamia's peacock was made of some plumage she had stolen from the wings of Cupid."

"And what was the reason that prevented you from telling me before?"

"Because, beautiful Juno, I am the most discreet of men, and respect the secret of a lady, however trifling."

"I am glad to hear that," replied Juno, and they re-entered the palace.

## V

Mercury met Juno and Ixion in the gallery leading to the grand banquetting hall.

"I was looking for you," said the God, shaking his head. "Jove is in a sublime rage. Dinner has been ready this hour."

The King of Thessaly and the Queen of Heaven exchanged a glance and entered the saloon. Jove looked up with a brow of thunder, but did not condescend to send forth a single flash of anger. Jove looked up and Jove looked down. All Olympus trembled as the father of Gods and men resumed his soup. The rest of the guests seemed nervous and reserved, except Cupid, who said immediately to Juno, "Your Majesty has been detained?"

"I fell asleep in a bower reading Apollo's last poem," replied Juno. "I am lucky, however, in finding a companion in my negligence. Ixion, where have you been?"

"Take a glass of nectar, Juno," said Cupid, with eyes twinkling with mischief; "and perhaps Ixion will join us."

This was the most solemn banquet ever celebrated in Olympus. Everyone seemed out of humour or out of spirits. Jupiter spoke only in monosyllables of suppressed rage, that sounded like distant thunder.

Apollo whispered to Minerva. Mercury never opened his lips, but occasionally exchanged significant glances with Ganymede. Mars compensated, by his attentions to Venus, for his want of conversation. Cupid employed himself in asking disagreeable questions. At length the goddesses retired. Mercury exerted himself to amuse Jove, but the Thunderer scarcely deigned to smile at his best stories. Mars picked his teeth,—Apollo played with his rings,—Ixion was buried in a profound reverie.

## VI

It was a great relief to all when Ganymede summoned them to the presence of their late companions.

"I have written a comment upon your inscription," said Minerva to Ixion, "and am anxious for your opinion of it."

"I am a wretched critic," said the King, breaking away from her. Juno smiled upon him in the distance.

"Ixion," said Venus, as he passed by, "come and talk to me."

The bold Thessalian blushed, he stammered out an unmeaning excuse, he quitted the astonished but good-natured Goddess, and seated himself by Juno, and, as he seated himself, his moody brow seemed suddenly illumined with brilliant light.

"Is it so?" said Venus.

"Hem!" said Minerva.

"Ha, ha!" said Cupid.

Jupiter played piquette with Mercury.

"Everything goes wrong to-day," said the King of Heaven; "cards wretched, and kept waiting for dinner, and by—a mortal!"

"Your Majesty must not be surprised," said the good-natured Mercury, with whom Ixion was no favourite. "Your Majesty must not be very much surprised at the conduct of this creature. Considering what he is, and where he is, I am only astonished that his head is not more turned than it appears to be. A man, a thing made of mud, and in Heaven! Only think, sire! Is it not enough to inflame the brain of any child of clay? To be sure, keeping your Majesty from dinner is little short of celestial high treason. I hardly expected that, indeed. To order me about, to treat Ganymede as his own lacquey, and, in short, to command the whole household; all this might be expected from such a person in such a situation, but I confess I did think he had some little respect left for your Majesty."

"And he does order you about, eh?" inquired Jove. "I have the spades."

"Oh! 'tis quite ludicrous," responded the Son of Maia. "Your Majesty would not expect from me the offices that this absurd upstart daily requires."

"Eternal destiny! is't possible? That is my trick. And Ganymede, too?"

"Oh! quite shocking, I assure you, sire," said the beautiful cup-bearer, leaning over the chair of Jove, with all the easy insolence of a privileged favourite. "Really, sire, if Ixion is to go on in the way he does, either he or I must quit."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Jupiter. "But I can believe anything of a man who keeps me waiting for dinner. Two and three make five."

"It is Juno that encourages him so," said Ganymede.

"Does she encourage him?" inquired Jove.

"Everybody notices it," protested Ganymede.

"It is indeed a little noticed," observed Mercury.

"What business has such a fellow to speak to Juno?" exclaimed Jove. "A mere mortal, a mere miserable mortal! You have the point. How I have been deceived in this fellow! Who ever could have supposed that, after all my generosity to him, he would ever have kept me waiting for dinner?"

"He was walking with Juno," said Ganymede. "It was all a sham about their having met by accident. Cupid saw them."

"Hah!" said Jupiter, turning pale; "you don't say so! Re-piqued, as I am a God. That is mine. Where is the Queen?"

"Talking to Ixion, sire," said Mercury. "Oh, I beg your pardon, sire; I did not know you meant the queen of diamonds."

"Never mind. I am re-piqued, and I have been kept waiting for dinner. Accursed be this day! Is Ixion really talking to Juno? We will not endure this."

## VII

"Where is Juno?" demanded Jupiter.

"I am sure I cannot say," said Venus with a smile.

"I am sure I do not know," said Minerva, with a sneer.

"Where is Ixion?" said Cupid, laughing outright.

"Mercury, Ganymede, find the Queen of Heaven instantly," thundered the father of Gods and men.

The celestial messenger and the heavenly page flew away out of different doors. There was a terrible, an immortal silence. Sublime rage lowered on the brow of Jove like a storm upon the mountain top. Minerva seated herself at the card-table and played at Patience. Venus and Cupid tittered in the background. Shortly returned the envoys, Mercury looking very solemn, Ganymede very malignant.

"Well?" inquired Jove; and all Olympus trembled at the monosyllable.

Mercury shook his head.

"Her Majesty has been walking on the terrace with the King of Thessaly," replied Ganymede.

"Where is she now, sir?" demanded Jupiter.

Mercury shrugged his shoulders.

"Her Majesty is resting herself in the pavilion of Cupid, with the King of Thessaly," replied Ganymede.

"Confusion!" exclaimed the father of Gods and men; and he rose and seized a candle from the table, scattering the cards in all directions. Every one present, Minerva and Venus, and Mars and Apollo, and Mercury and Ganymede, and the Muses, and the Graces, and all the winged Genii—each seized a candle; rifling the chandeliers, each followed Jove.

"This way," said Mercury.

"This way," said Ganymede.

"This way, this way!" echoed the celestial crowd.

"Mischief!" cried Cupid, "I must save my victims."

They were all upon the terrace. The father of Gods and men, though both in a passion and a hurry, moved with dignity. It was, as customary in Heaven, a clear and starry night; but this eve Diana was indisposed, or otherwise engaged, and there was no moonlight. They were in sight of the pavilion.

"What are you?" inquired Cupid of one of the Genii, who accidentally extinguished his candle.

"I am a Cloud," answered the winged Genius.

"A Cloud! Just the thing. Now do me a shrewd turn, and Cupid is ever your debtor. Fly, fly, pretty Cloud, and encompass yon pavilion with your form. Away! ask no questions—swift as my word."

"I declare there is a fog," said Venus.

"An evening mist in Heaven!" said Minerva.

"Where is Nox?" said Jove. "Everything goes wrong. Who ever heard of a mist in Heaven?"

"My candle is out," said Apollo.

"And mine too," said Mars.

"And mine—and mine—and mine," said Mercury and Ganymede, and the Muses and the Graces.

"All the candles are out!" said Cupid; "a regular fog. I cannot even see the pavilion: it must be hereabouts, though," said the God to himself. "So, so; I should be at home in my

own pavilion, and am tolerably accustomed to stealing about in the dark. There ■ a step ; and here, surely here is the lock. The door opens, but the Cloud enters before me. Juno, Juno," whispered the God of Love, "we are all here. Be contented to escape, like many other innocent dames, with your reputation only under a cloud : it will soon disperse ; and lo ! the heaven is clearing."

"It must have been the heat of our flambeaux," said Venus ; "for see, the mist is vanished ; here is the pavilion."

Ganymede ran forward, and dashed open the door. Ixion was alone.

"Seize him !" said Jove.

"Juno is not here," said Mercury, with an air of blended congratulation and disappointment.

"Never mind," said Jove, "seize him ! He kept me waiting for dinner."

"Is this your hospitality, Ægiochus ?" exclaimed Ixion, in a tone of bullying innocence. "I shall defend myself."

"Seize him, seize him !" exclaimed Jupiter. "What ! do you all falter ? Are you afraid of a mortal ?"

"And a Thessalian ?" added Ganymede.

No one advanced.

"Send for Hercules," said Jove.

"I will fetch him in an instant," said Ganymede.

"I protest," said the King of Thessaly, "against this violation of the most sacred rights."

"The marriage tie ?" said Mercury.

"The dinner-hour ?" said Jove.

"It is no use talking sentiment to Ixion," said Venus ; "all mortals are callous."

"Adventures are to the adventurous," said Minerva.

"Here is Hercules !—here is Hercules !"

"Seize him !" said Jove ; "seize that man."

In vain the mortal struggled with the irresistible demi-god.

"Shall I fetch your thunderbolt, Jove ?" inquired Ganymede.

"Anything short of eternal punishment is unworthy of a God," answered Jupiter, with great dignity. "Apollo, bring me a wheel of your chariot."

"What shall I do to-morrow morning ?" inquired the God of Light.

"Order an eclipse," replied Jove. "Bind the insolent wretch to the wheel ; hurl him to Hades ; its motion shall be perpetual."

"What am I to bind him with ?" inquired Hercules.

"The girdle of Venus," replied the Thunderer.

"What is all this ?" inquired Juno, advancing, pale and agitated.

"Come along, you shall see," answered Jupiter. "Follow me, follow me."

They all followed the leader—all the Gods, all the Genii ; in the midst, the brawny husband of Hebe bearing Ixion aloft, bound to the fatal wheel. They reached the terrace ; they descended the sparkling steps of lapis-lazuli. Hercules held his burthen on high, ready, at a nod, to plunge the hapless, but presumptuous mortal through space into Hades. The heavenly group surrounded him, and peeped over the starry abyss. It was a fine moral, and demonstrated the usual infelicity that attends unequal connections.

"Celestial despot !" said Ixion.

In a moment all sounds were hushed, as they listened to the last words of the unrivalled victim. Juno, in despair, leant upon the respective arms of Venus and Minerva.

"Celestial despot !" said Ixion, "I defy the immortal ingenuity of thy cruelty. My memory must be as eternal as thy torture : that will support me."

## THE FUGITIVE

By GRACE AGUILAR

Grace Aguilar, born in London 1816, died 1847. She belonged to a family descended from Portuguese Maranos (secret Jews) who sought asylum in England in the seventeenth century. She showed a literary tendency at the age of seven, when she started a diary which she continued almost uninterruptedly until her death. Before she was twelve she had written a drama, "Gustavus Vasa." Her collected poems were published in 1835. She wrote mostly stories and religious works dealing with Jewish subjects. "The Vale of Cedars," her most popular work, has been translated into German and Hebrew.

JUDAH AZAVÉDO was the only son of a rich Jewish merchant, settled in London. His grandfather, a native and resident of Portugal, having witnessed the fearful proceedings of the Inquisition on some of his relations and friends, secretly followers of Israel, as himself, fled to Holland, bearing with him no inconsiderable property. This, through successful commerce, swelled into wealth; and when, on his death, his son, with his wife and child, removed to England, and settled in the metropolis, they were considered alike in birth, education and riches, one of the very highest families of the proud and aristocratic Portuguese.

But the situation of the Jews in England, some eighty or ninety years ago, was very different to their situation now. Riches, nay, even moral and mental dignity, were not then the passport to society and friendliness. Lingering prejudice, still predominant in the hearts of the English, and pride and nationality equally strong in the hearts of the Hebrew, kept both parties aloof, so that no advance could be made on either side, and each remained profoundly ignorant of the other, not alone on the subject of opposing creeds, but of actual character.

This, though certainly a social evil, was in some respects, as concerned the Israelites, a national good. It drew them more closely, more kindly together; aliens and strangers to the children of other lands, the true followers of their persecuted creed were as brothers. Rich or poor, it mattered not. Hebrews and Portuguese

were the ties in common, and the joy or grief of one family was the joy or grief of all. Fashion was little thought of. Heartlessness and that false pride which forswears relation to or connection with poverty were unknown. Faults, too, no doubt they had ; but a more kindly, noble-hearted set of men, in their own sphere, than the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, nearly a hundred years ago, never had existence.

The restlessness, oversensitiveness of Judah Azavédo was a subject of as much surprise to his nation as of regret to his father. Sole heir to immense wealth unencumbered with business—nothing to occupy him but his own pleasure—gifted with unusual mental powers—dignified in figure—a kindly and most winning manner, when he chose to exert it ; yet his whole life embittered by the morbid sensitiveness with which he regarded his most unfortunate lack of all attraction in face and figure. He was absolutely and disagreeably plain ; we could say ugly, did we not so exceedingly dislike the word. Yet there were times when the glow of mind, or still more warmth of heart, would throw such a soft and gentle expression over the almost deformed features, that their natural disfigurement ceased to be remembered. Those who knew him never felt any difference between him and his fellow-men, save in his superior heart and mind ; but Azavédo himself always imagined that, wherever he went, he must be an object of derision or dislike. He shrank from all society, particularly that of females, who, he was convinced, would be terrified even to look at him. Entreaties, commands, or remonstrances were in vain. Could he have known more, mingled more with the world at large, these morbid feelings would, in time, have been rubbed off ; but in his very limited circle of familiar friends this was impossible and the evil, in consequence, each year increased.

To the Israelites of ninety years ago, the idea of travelling for pleasure was incomprehensible ; they were too happy and too grateful to the land which gave them rest and peace to think of quitting it for any other. That Judah Azavédo should restlessly desire to leave England, and seek excitement in foreign lands, was in accordance with all his other extraordinary features ; but that his father, the wise, sedate, contented old man, whose every hope and affection were centred in this son, should give his consent, was more extraordinary still ; and many, in kindness, sought to dissuade

**He was absent three years, having travelled as far as the East, and visited every scene endeared to him as one of that favourite race for whom the sea itself had been divided.**

He had looked on misery, in so many varied forms, as the portion of his nation, that he felt reproached and ashamed at his own repinings. He learnt that only sin and crime could authorise the misery he had endured ; that he was an immortal being, and one whose earthly lot was blessed so much above thousands of his brethren, that he only marvelled his sin of discontent had not called down on him the wrath of God. His soul seemed suddenly free from fetters, and he moved among his fellow men fearless and unabashed.

Notwithstanding the danger of such a route—for, if known, or even suspected as a Hebrew he would inevitably have perished—Judah chose to return home through Spain and Portugal, making himself known to some friends of his family still dwelling in the latter kingdom. With them he remained some few months, and then it was that a new emotion awoke within him, chaining him effectually, ere aware of its existence. From his earliest youth Judah had dreaded, and so forsworn love, feeling it next to impossible for him ever to be loved in return ; but love laughs at such forswearers. Before he could analyse why that bitterness against his unhappy ugliness should return, when he had thought it so successfully conquered, he loved with the full passionate fervour of his race and his own peculiar disposition, and loved one of whom he could learn nothing, trace nothing, know nothing, save that she was so surpassingly lovely, that though he had seen her but three times, never near, and only once without her veil, her beauty both of face and form lingered on his memory as indelibly engraved as if it had lain there for years, and then had been called into existence by some strangely-awakening flash. She was as unknown to his friends as to himself ; only at the Opera had she been visible ; no inquiry, no search could elicit information. Once only he had heard the sound of her voice, and it breathed music as thrilling and transporting as the beauty of her face.

Yet she was neither saintlike nor angelic ; ■ was an arch witchery, a shadowless glee, infused with the nameless, descriptionless, but convincing charm of mind.

Judah Azavédo returned home, an altered man, yet still no one could understand him. He no longer morbidly shunned society, nor even cared to eschew the company of females, seeming as wholly careless and insensible to the effects of his presence as he had before thought too much about it. Some said he was scornfully proud ; others, that he was unhappy, and from some deep-seated sorrow essentially distinct from the feelings engrossing him when he left England, and that this one feeling it was which rendered him so totally indifferent to everything else.

Three, nearly four years elapsed, and Azavédo, in character and habits, remained the same. His father was dead, leaving him immense wealth, which he used nobly and generously, winning " golden opinions " from every class and condition of men, who, at the same time, wished that they could quite understand him ; and so we must leave him to waft our readers over the salt seas, and introduce them to a more southern land and a very different person.

In a luxuriously-furnished apartment of a beautiful little villa, a few miles from Lisbon, was seated a lady of that extraordinary beauty which ever fastens on the memory as by some strange spell. Not more than three or four and twenty, all the freshness of girlhood was so united to the more mature graces of woman, that it was often difficult to say to which of these two periods of life she belonged. Her large, lustrous, jet-black eye, and the small, pouting mouth, alike expressed at will either the mischievous glee of a mirth-loving girl or the high-souled intellectuality of maturer woman. Hair of that deep, dark brown, only to be distinguished from black when the sunshine falls upon it, lay in rich masses and braids around the beautifully-shaped head, and giving from the contrast, yet more dazzling fairness to the pure complexion of face and throat which it shaded ; the brow, so thought " thronged " when at rest, yet lit up when eye and mouth so willed, with such arch laughter-loving glee ; but we must pause for the pen can never do beauty justice, and even if it did, would be accused of exaggeration although there yet remain those, who from personal acquaintance, can still bear witness to its truth.

A gentleman was standing near her as she sat on her sofa, in the

busy idleness of embroidery ; and as part of their conversation may elucidate our tale we will record it briefly as may be.

" Then you refused him ? "

" Can you ask ? " and the lightning flash of the lady's dark eye betrayed unwonted indignation. " He who would have tempted a helpless girl of seventeen—I was then no more, though I had been married nearly a year—under such specious reasoning, that I dreamed not his drift till the words of actual insult came ; sought to sow suspicion and distrust in my heart against my husband, his own brother, to serve his vile purposes : and you ask me if I refused him, when, being once more free to wed, he dared pollute me with his abhorred addresses ! Julian, my fair cousin, have you so forgotten Inez ? "

" If I had, that indignant burst would have recalled her ; but of insult, remember, I knew nothing. You were married when so young to a man much older than yourself, that when I heard of his death, three years ago, I fancied, as you know is often the case with us, you would have married his younger brother, so much more suitable in point of qualities and years."

" More suitable ! Wrong again, cousin mine. If I did not love my husband, I respected, honoured him—yes, loved him too as a father ; but as for Don Pedro, as men call him, Julian, I would rather have trusted the tender mercies of the Inquisition than I would him, and so I told him."

" You could not have been so mad ! "

" In sober truth, I was feeling too thoroughly indignant to weigh my words. It matters not, he dare not work me harm, for the secret on which alone he can, involves his safety as well as mine."

" I wish I could think so ; there are many to say that he is in truth what he appears to be, and therefore one most dangerous to offend."

" I fear him as little as I scorn him much. I have heard this report before, but heed it not at all. Our holy cause loses little in the apostasy of such a member."

" It may be so, Inez ; but he holds the lives of others in his keeping, and therefore revenge is easily obtained."

" You will not frighten me, Julian, try as you may. They say Pedro Benito is ill, almost to death—I am sorry for him, for I know no one is more unfit to die ; but I have far too much pride to fear him, believe me. Better he should injure me, than I my own

soul in uniting it with his. See," she continued, laughing as she pointed to the portly figure of a Dominican priest pushing his mule up the steep ascent leading to the villa, in such evident haste and trepidation as to occasion some amusement to his beholders ; "there is more fear there than I shall ever feel. What can the poor priest need ? Do you know him, Julian ? Comes he to you or me ! "

" I trust to neither, Inez, for such hot haste bodes little good."

" Why, now, what a craven you have grown ! I will disown you for my cousin if you pluck not up more spirit, man ! "

Julian Alvarez tried to give as jesting a reply, but succeeded badly, his spirits feeling strangely anxious and oppressed. He was spared further rallying on the part of Inez, by the sudden reappearance of the priest (whom they had lost by a curve in the ascent) without his mule, at the private entrance of Inez's own garden, and without ceremony or question neared the window. Inez addressed him courteously, though with evident surprise ; the priest seemed not to heed her words, but laying his hand on her arm, said, in a deep low tone,—

" Donna Inez, this in no time for courtesy or form. Daughter, fly ! even now the bloodhounds are on the track. The scent has been given ; a dying man proclaimed you a Jewess in hearing of others besides his confessor, else had you still been safe and free. Ere two hours, nay, in less time they will be here. Away ! pause not for thought ; seek to save nothing but life, too precious for such sacrifice. A vessel lies moored below, which a brisk hour's walk will reach. She sails for England the moment the wind shifts ; secure a passage in her, and trust in the God of Israel for the rest."

" And who are you who can thus care for me, knowing that which I am ? " answered the lady, in accents low as the supposed priest's, but far less faltering, and only evincing the shock she had sustained by the sudden whiteness of cheek and lip.

" Men call me—think me, Padre José, my child ; but were I such you had not seen me here. *That which you are am I*, and because I thought Pedro Benito the same, I stood beside his death bed. Vengeance and apostasy went hand in hand. Ask no more but hence at once ; how may those fragile limbs bear the rack—the flames ? Señor Alvarez, shake off this stupor, or ■ will be too late ! "

Julian did indeed stand as paralysed, so suddenly and fearfully were his worst fears confirmed. Fly ! and from all—home, friends, luxury, to be poor and dependent in a strange land. It was even so ; the voice of vengeance had betrayed the fatal secret of race and faith, the very first whisper of which consigned to the Inquisition—but another word for torture and death. In two short hours, part of which had already gone, Inez had to find the vessel, be received on board, and leave no trace whatever of her way. Her very domestics must suspect nothing, or discovery would inevitably ensue. And yet, in the midst of all this sudden accumulation of misfortune, Inez but once betrayed emotion.

" Julian, Julian, my boy ! " she exclaimed, her sole answer to the reiterated entreaties of her companions for her to depart at once ; " what will they not do to him ? "

" Nothing, lady ; he shall be with me till he can rejoin you. Who will suspect Padre José of harbouring an Israelite save to convert him to the Holy Faith ? "

Inez caught the old man's hand, her lips and eyelids quivering convulsively ; but even the passion of choking tears was conquered by the power of mind. In less than half an hour she was walking, at a brisk pace, through the shrubberies, in the direction of the river, enveloped in mantilla and veil, and Julian Alvarez, carrying a small parcel, containing the few jewels which she could collect, and one or two articles of clothing, all that the mistress of thousands could save from the rapacious hands which, under the garb of religion, were ever stretched out to confiscate and to destroy.

Scarcely had they quitted the shrubberies, after nearly an hour's brisk walking, and entered the high road, their only path, when about a dozen men, in the full livery of the Holy Office, were clearly discernible on a slight rising not half a mile beyond them, pushing their horses so as to directly face them, and advancing at full speed. To turn back was to excite suspicion, to meet them, tempt discovery. Fortunately a small enclosure of tall larches and thick firs lay forward, a little to the left, and there Inez impelled her bewildered companion, walking as carelessly to all appearance, as if taking a saunter for amusement. They saw the troop rapidly advance, pause exactly in front of their hiding-place, look round inquiringly ; one or two spurred forwards, as to beat the bushes ; a man's step at the same time sounded in the rear—his dress

fanned them as he passed : it was one of Donna Inez's own labourers. They heard him hailed as he appeared, and questions asked, of which they heard nothing but that wordless sound of voices so torturing to those who deem that life or death are hanging on the words. A few minutes—feeling hours—the conference lasted ; some direction, loudly repeated along the file, betrayed that their questions only related to their further route to the Villa Benito, and the horses galloped on.

Without exchanging a syllable, Inez and her companion hurried forward. It was still full half-an-hour's walk to the river, the sun was declining and the wind had risen fresh and balmy ; but while Julian rejoiced in its reviving powers, he trembled lest it should be bearing his cousin's only chance of safety farther from them. Their pace was brisk as could be, yet every step seemed clogged with lead, and weary felt the way, till the river's brink was gained. Bathed in the lingering glow of a magnificent sunset, the bright waters lay before them, and every sail spread, gliding softly yet swiftly on her course, they beheld the longed-for vessel receding from their sight.

For one minute they stood, gazing on the departing ship, as mute, as feelingless as stone, save to the horrible consciousness that flight was over, all hope of escape must be vain. But great emergencies prevent the continuance of despair. Ere Julian had recovered the stupor of alike disappointment and dread, Inez had hailed the boatman, and, drawing a diamond ring of immense value from her hand, bade him place her in safety on board the English vessel, and it should be his. The man hesitated, then swore it was worth the trial, and very speedily a boat was ready manned by four stout rowers impatient as herself.

" And now farewell, dear Julian ! " she said calmly, taking the parcel from his hand, and looking into his astonished face with her own sweet smile. " You go no farther ; I will not risk your life, so precious to your wife and children, because I weakly fear to meet my destiny alone. Do not attempt to argue with me, it will be useless, as you ought to know. Look to my poor boy, he needs you more than I do." Her voice sank to a thrilling whisper : " The God we *both* serve bless you, and keep you from a similar fate."

She wrung his hand, and lightly springing into the boat, it was pushed off, and rapidly cutting the yielding waters, ere Julian

Alvarez recovered sufficiently from his emotion to speak even a farewell word. And now, with feelings wrought almost to agony, he watched a chase seemingly utterly vain. For some time the vessel still kept ahead, but the efforts of the rowers in no degree relaxed. He heard their stentorian hail repeated by the innumerable echoes on the shore, but still there seemed no answer. Again, and yet again ! It is fancy. No, the sails are lowered, the vessel's speed is diminished, till the boat appears almost alongside. Julian strained his gaze, while his very heart felt to have ceased beating, in the sickening fear that even now her flight might be prevented by a refusal to receive her. He could discern no more, for twilight had gathered round him, and interminable seemed the interval till the boat returned with the blessed assurance that the señora was safe on board.

Night fell ; the lovely southern night, with the silvery moonshine on the gleaming waters, its glistening stars, appearing suspended in the upper air as globes of liquid light, with its fresh, soft breezes, bearing such sweet scents from the odoriferous shores, that a poet might have fancied angelic spirits were abroad, making the atmosphere luminous with their pure presence, and every breeze fragrant with their luscious breath.

Inez sat upon the deck, a fugitive, and alone. She who, only the evening previous, had been the centre of a brilliant group, whose halls had sounded with the voice of revelry, the blithesome dance, when aught of sorrow seemed so far away, as to be but a name not a reality. To us, looking back on the extraordinary fact of the most Catholic kingdoms being literally peopled with secret Jews, whose property and life might be sacrificed from one hour to another, it appears incomprehensible that security or happiness could ever have existed, and still more difficult to understand what secret feeling it was that thus bound them to a country where, acknowledged or discovered, Judaism was death, when there were other parts of the globe where they could be protected and received. Yet so it was, and there are still families in England to trace their descent from those who, like the Señora Benito, were compelled to fly at an hour's warning, saving little else than life.

Some spirits would have sunk under the misfortune, so sudden, so overwhelming in its details, but Inez rose above it. She had nothing to look to but her own resources ; the few valuables she had secreted would, she knew, soon be exhausted, did she depend

on them alone. She was going to a land where she knew no one, her only credentials being a letter hurriedly written by her cousin to one of his friends in London. Loneliness, privation, care and even manual toil, all awaited her, child as she had been of luxury and wealth, lavished as it was believed exhaustless ; yet, as she looked forth on the glorious night with her starlit dome, as she inhaled the sweet breath of thousands of flowers floating on the breeze, she knew she was not forsaken. He who cared for all nature would still more care for her, and when the spirit is at peace, how lightly is all of sorrow borne.

The unusual stir in the harbour, which they reached about midnight, attracted the attention not only of Inez, but of the captain and crew. On stopping at the quay for passengers and freight, he was told that the vessel must remain at anchor, no English ship being allowed to leave the harbour until it had received a visit from the officers of the Inquisition, in search of a female fugitive suspected of Judaism, who, having effectually disappeared from her home, was supposed to have taken refuge in some English vessel, the general receivers of heretics and unbelievers.

"I halt not at any man's beck or bidding!" was the proud reply. "England owns no Inquisitional supremacy. Had any such fugitive taken refuge in my ship, no power of the Inquisition, backed by the whole kingdom, should force me to give her up."

Time for reply or seizure there was none. Every sail spread at the word of command, and almost bending beneath her weight of canvas, the gallant ship, with her right English-hearted crew, sped on to sea.

Inez had seen all, felt all—but though her heart beat quicker, no word or sign betrayed it. She saw the captain look hastily on her, and for a terrible moment she knew not whether the glance of discovery, for such it was, would be followed by her surrender or her safety. His words speedily reassured her, and sent her to the berth provided for her comfort, with more care than for any other passenger, with the grateful feeling that all of danger was indeed at end. She was in England's keeping and no Inquisition could work her harm. Nor was it the mere excitement of misfortune which so endowed her with courage to endure. She retained not only firmness but liveliness during the voyage, and when received in England with the most hospitable kindness by

Julian's friends, gaily consulted them on the best means of subsistence—whether to take in plain work or enter upon the business of fancy confectionery, for both of which her convent education had well fitted her. And what with her brilliant beauty, her sparkling wit, and readiness of repartee, ere two days had passed she had completely fascinated old and young.

The evening of the third day, Mr. Nunez's family had been engaged to spend with a friend living a few miles from London. On sending to state that a Portuguese lady staying with them would prevent their going, an entreaty was instantly forwarded that she would accompany them

"What, go! and my whole wardrobe consists of this one dress?" was her laughing reply. "I shall bring shame on your fashionable reputation, my kind friends."

They assured her that dress was of little consequence, and even if it were, she need not be alarmed, being more likely to bring them fame by the fashion of her face than shame by the plainness of her robe; which, by the way, a rich black velvet, set off the dazzling clearness of her complexion more becomingly than the most carefully-assorted garb.

To the house of their friend, in consequence, they went; and the beautiful stranger with her broken English, sweetly-spoken Portuguese, and most romantic story, soon commanded universal attention.

Towards the middle of the evening, a rapidly approaching carriage, followed by a thundering rap, announced the arrival of some new guest.

"That is Azavédo," observed one. "I know him by the sound of his four horses. A strange fancy that, always sporting a carriage and four, when in everything else he has no pretension whatever. Did you expect him, Cordoza?" he asked of his host.

"He said he might look in on his way to Epping," was the reply.

"What a changed man he is," said another. "I remember when he literally loathed society and shrank from beauty, male or female, as if it stung him by contrast with himself."

"I have never heard him admire a woman yet though," rejoined the first speaker. "I wonder if he will notice the beauty of to-night?"

Azavédo entered as he spoke, and, after addressing his host

and hostess, began an earnest conversation with a friend near them.

A low, musical laugh from the centre of a merry group at the opposite end of the large drawing-room caused Azavédo suddenly to start, with such an indescribable change of countenance, as to impel the anxious query whether he were ill. He answered hurriedly in the negative, but his friend perceiving his eye fixed on the group, eagerly entered on the story of the stranger, from whom the laugh had come, inviting him to join the circle round her. Somewhat hesitatingly he did so. Inez, in compliance with the customs of her own country, still wore her veil, which, in answer to the inquiry of someone near her as to the different fashions of wearing it in Portugal, she had drawn so closely round her as to hide every feature.

"Tell her that it is not the custom of English ladies to wear veils," whispered Azavédo to his hostess, in tones of such strong and most unusual excitement, that she looked at him as if in doubt of his identity. His hint was acted upon, however, and Inez, with winning courtesy, soon after laid aside her veil.

Azavédo had become in some degree a man of the world, and it was well he was, or he might have found it difficult so to suppress inward emotion as to conceal it from those around him. He looked once more on the being who for four long years had in secret so occupied his heart, as never to permit the entrance of another image, or the faintest thought of another love. She was there, not only yet more radiant in finished loveliness than when he had first beheld her, but free, and of his own race and creed. And so exquisite were the feelings of the moment, that he feared to be introduced, lest her first glance upon his face, if it revealed the horror that he believed it would, should sentence him to misery.

That he had trembled needlessly was proved by his never leaving her side that evening. The lively spirits of the young stranger appeared by some extraordinary species of mesmerism to call forth the same from him; and he conversed more brilliantly, more unreservedly, than he had ever been known to do.

Judah Azavédo pursued his journey to his country-house, and Inez quietly fixed her residence with a Jewish family in London, and pursued her intention of taking in plain work; giving no more thought of her former affluence, save to wish that part had

been spared for her boy, who, through the efforts of Padre José and Julian Alvarez, joined her about three weeks after her flight, bringing the information that every article belonging to her had been seized and confiscated.

Twice a week, then three times, and at length every day, did Azavédo, on some pretence or another, visit the fair fugitive. Folks talked and wondered, but for once he heeded neither. But why prolong our tale, claimed as it is by truth, however it may read like fiction? Not six weeks after Inez left Portugal, a fugitive for her very life, she became the wife of Judah Azavédo, the richest Hebrew in London, and the possessor of a love as warm and unwavering as was ever felt by man. But did she—could she—return ■ ? Reader, we will not blazon the simplicity of truth with the false colouring of romance. *She did not* love him, in the general acceptance of the term, and she told him so, beseeching him to withdraw his offer, if his heart could not rest satisfied with the respect and gratitude which alone she felt. He thanked her for her candour, but the hand was not withdrawn, and they were married. Some biographers stop here, bidding the curious reader probe not too deeply into the history of wedded life. As regards our heroine however, we shrink not from the probe. The *romance* of love before marriage she might not have known, but its *reality afterwards* she made so manifest, even when disease, joined to other infirmities, so tried her husband as to render him fretful and irritable, that there are still living some to assert that never was wife more tenderly affectionate, more devotedly faithful than was Inez Azavédo. Her extraordinary beauty seemed invulnerable to age, for I have heard it said that even in her coffin—and she lived to the full age of mortality—she retained it still.

## LEOPOLD SONTHEIM'S CONFESSION

By MATHILDE BLIND

Mathilde Blind (Cohen), born 1841, in Germany, died in London in 1896. After the death of her father, a retired banker named Cohen, her mother married Dr. Karl Blind, the famous German revolutionary, and their step-father's name was assumed by Mathilde and her brother Ferdinand (who made an attempt on the life of Bismarck in 1866, and committed suicide in prison the following day—"a noble-spirited but too impetuous youth, who in a transport of patriotic indignation" thought that the removal of Bismarck would prevent Germany being plunged into a causeless war. "His—Ferdinand's—dead body became the object of a cult," Bismarck afterwards said in the Reichstag.).

She was seven when the failure of the 1848 revolution drove the Blinds into exile, and they came to London. Garibaldi, Mazzini and other revolutionary heroes visited the house and fired her imagination. She often met Swinburne and heard him read his poems. She made her first appearance as an authoress in 1867 with a volume of poems, and other volumes followed, poetry, translations, essays, tales. "She shone principally in conversation, her brilliant slings were sparks struck out from the collision of mind with mind." Ford Madox Brown and his wife were great friends of hers, and their house was for several years her home. Dr. Ludwig Mond, the famous scientist, (grandfather of the present Lord Melchett) and his wife were also great friends, and they erected the monument over her last resting-place, and also published a memorial volume of her poetical writings.

It was very early yet, barely five o'clock, but Leopold Sontheim was already up and stirring, for from the back-yard of his dwelling you could hear the powerful strokes of his mallet, as he was hewing the unwieldy logs of wood into smaller pieces available for kitchen use. No wonder therefore that, absorbed in his work, he did not catch a quick, impatient drumming at his study window, which, increasing in loudness, at last merged into a regular tune. After the interval of a few minutes the window, which was only on the latch, was pushed inwards, and the impatient drummer vaulted into the room, and thence passed through the passage into the yard, where he suddenly saluted the hard-working Sontheim with a sounding slap on the shoulder.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed the latter, looking up. "Oh, it's you, old fellow; I'm right glad to see you!" and he cordially extended his disengaged hand, while with the other he continued *■* *direct several more blows on his iron wedge with all the zeal of an amateur.*

"What a Jack-of-all-trades you are!" remarked Emanuel, looking on. "Not satisfied with being a professor of jurisprudence, an authority on Aristophanes, a skilled translator from some half-a-dozen languages, you must needs turn hewer of wood and drawer of water also!"

"The wood's very well, but where's the water?" asked Sontheim grimly.

"Why, trickling down your nose in a little rivulet, to be sure," said Emanuel, making a grimace. "But come, put down that appalling implement; one would think I was an inopportune guest at this fashionable hour."

"Well, well," replied Sontheim, putting down his mallet, and wiping the perspiration from his heated face, "laugh away, my son; but this is my way, you see, of keeping down the flesh and the devil; besides, one wants something of the kind for the muscles and sinews *■* come into play as well as the brain fibres; and here in Germany, with our eternal stooping over books, we are all in danger of growing as limp as rags, and as short sighted as owls. But come in where you can sit down somewhere"; and he led the way into the house. "Here's a seat for you," he added, eagerly sweeping a lot of books, pamphlets, newspapers, and time-yellowed manuscripts from the shabby old sofa, and clearing just enough space for his friend to sit down upon; then, slipping a somewhat battered dressing-gown over his shirt-sleeves, he filled himself a pipe and offered one to his friend. The latter, who had flung himself on the sofa, and was leaning back as if quite wearied out, declined, saying that he never smoked.

"But dear me!" exclaimed Sontheim, after looking more attentively at his visitor, "instead of the briskness of an early bird, you have the air of a dissipated night bird with its feathers all awry! Why, what on earth have you been up to now? Look at your boots all sopping wet, for all the world as if you had jumped over a hedge into a duck-pond, running away from some farmer's wife's husband."

"My boots have as little polish on them as your remarks,"

said Emanuel, shrugging his shoulders; "but farmers' wives have no attraction for me. The fact is, I've been half over the country to-night."

"Why, you must be furnishing, my boy!" cried Sontheim, jumping up. "How stupid of me not to have thought of it before!" and he went to the door calling loudly, "Pauline, Pauline!"

After what appeared a considerable interval, a lady's head with meagre hair in curl-papers became visible through the half-open door. "Come in!" she said, in a whispered consultation with her brother, which might have been heard at the other end of the room; "that's like your want of consideration for one's feelings. How can I show myself before the 'Friseurin' has been, and before such a very genteel-looking gentleman, too? I'll see what we can dish up at this unseasonable hour, and cook shall bring it in as soon as ever it can be got ready."

"Beat up a dozen eggs or so," whispered Sontheim after the retreating figure.

"Well, now, Emanuel, let's hear all about your adventure," said the Professor sitting down, and following with his eyes the wreaths of smoke that went dwindling away into ever thinner circles above his head.

"Oh," said Emanuel laughing, "I leave adventures and farmers' wives to you. Sorry I can't gratify your curiosity, but I only rambled abroad because I had a sleepless fit on me, and when I heard the watchman call—'Past twelve of the clock, and a fine starlight night,' I donned my cloak, stole down the stairs and out into the open, where the sky was alive with stars. I walked over the hills some eight miles or so, and got into a dale on the further side that I didn't remember having seen in my youth. There was a mill there by the side of the stream, and some scattered farms with orchards about them; resting in an apple-tree, I had the most delicious reverie, and one or two themes came into my head that I mean to work up by and by. Indeed I've made quite a good business of this night escapade."

"At any rate you won't tell me more than you choose, I see, but I hear the welcome clatter of cups and spoons," said Sontheim, as the door opened and a slatternly maid brought in a tray, and without much ado banged it down on the table and disappeared again. Sontheim poured his friend out a large cup of *café au lait*,

which the latter emptied at a drain, and then began vigorously tugging away at the scrambled eggs and smoked ham, declaring he had not tasted anything so delicious for a long time, and finishing off some milk rolls hot from the oven.

"By the way," remarked Sontheim, who had sat benignly watching the other, and filling his cup or plate as it was emptied—"I thought you seemed rather taken with my little god-daughter, Mina, yesterday. What could you have to say to the chit?"

"Oh, your god-daughter, is she!" said Emanuel, shortly. "How comes she to be that?"

"Why you see," answered Sontheim, "her father and I were great chums. He was one of the best fellows that ever lived, and one of the most learned, and taught me Sanskrit, to boot; but I never knew anyone less fitted to grapple with the realities of life than him, poor man. How he ever came to be married is one of those mysteries of human nature that defy explanation. Had Elise, indeed, been a crabbed Sanskrit manuscript, I could have understood his falling in love with her. But no doubt our omniscient Shakespeare is right in making the women folk take most of the love-making on themselves; and my poor professor was just the man to fall a helpless prey to the first *she* who should take it into her head to bring a fellow under petticoat government. And if ever a man had to bow his neck 'under his wife's slipper,' it was poor Heinrich Lichtenfeld. I remember one day," he continued laughing, "he ought to have been on his way to give a Greek lesson to some rich, stupid ass of a fellow, but had clean forgotten about it, and was poring over some obscure passage in the Mahabharata, when his wife, broom in hand, suddenly popped her head in at the door, and seeing her husband placidly sitting there in dressing-gown and slippers, waved her broom in the air, and flying at him, screamed:

"'Are you to be for ever at play, when there are five hungry mouths to be fed, leaving alone your wedded wife and the servant. We shall come to beg in the street, yet,' she lamented, the while poor Heinrich looked helplessly at her with his pale, glassy-blue eyes, as she helped him on with his coat, and pushed his hat on the back of his head. 'There, go and give your lesson, if you have any pity on your poor starving children,' she ended, leading the bewildered man to the street-door, and pushing him out as though he were blind."

Emanuel looked very much amused at the description of Mina's father, and remarked : " Well, after all, there's something to be said on the wife's side, too ; a married man must keep the pot boiling somehow. But is the family as badly off as all that ? " he added, more seriously.

" Oh, not now," replied Sontheim. " During the Professor's lifetime the wolf was with difficulty kept from the door, and one must in justice admit, that if anyone in the world could have succeeded in making the two ends meet, it was the Frau Professorin. But on her husband's death, his ill-luck seemed to die with him, and the good widow soon afterwards came into a very tidy little fortune, which, with her habits of thrift and industry, she makes go twice as far as anyone else could. Even as regards my poor friend's unrequited labours, curiously enough his dissertation on ' The supposititious conjoined Authorship of the Valmikiśloka, and the Rāmāyana,' has been recognised as one of the most valuable contributions to our knowledge on the subject. The best of it is that Lichtenfeld never considered himself unfortunate as another man would have done, but was so devoted to his studies that he never looked to get any reward beyond the pleasure he derived from them ; in fact, his wife was not so far out when she considered he was always at play."

" You quite rouse one's interest in the luckless Sanskrit Professor," said Emanuel ; " such an abnormal specimen of humanity is not to be met with out of the Fatherland. Has he been dead long ? "

" Let me see," answered Sontheim. " he died nearly four years ago, the youngest child was born shortly after her father's death. The only one who at all reminds me of the good man is my god-child, Mina."

" What, Fräulein Mina ? You must be joking, my good fellow," said Emanuel, smiling ; " What resemblance can there be between the abstracted book-worm you describe, and this sunshiny child of nature that seems thrilling with life as a bird does ? "

" Oh, that's how *you* see her," said Sontheim, casting a shrewd glance at his friend. " The resemblance lies deeper down than that, and would escape the notice of any but an intimate friend. I am very fond of the little one, and feel almost bound to watch over her in a way. But I confess," he added, carelessly, " she doesn't strike me as the sort of girl men are apt to fall in love with ;

there's not enough of the woman about her, she'd be the better for a spice of coquetry, in fact ! ”

“ Dear me, Sontheim, ” said Emanuel, somewhat ironically, “ I didn't know that among your multifarious studies you included that of the fair sex. ”

“ Oh ! ” exclaimed Sontheim, with a fatuous expression, “ when one has had the good fortune to fall in with ■■■ that's fascinating, alluring and supremely beautiful in womanhood, it makes one critical of the rest of the sex, no doubt ! ”

“ Dear me ! ” said Emanuel, in a bantering tone, “ you arouse my curiosity, you do. Can it be that this phoenix among women hides her charms in this town of yours ? And is she visible to eyes other than your favoured ones, Leopold ? ”

“ Jeer on if you like, my boy, ” said Sontheim, not at all put down by his friend's manner. “ You'd sing to a different tune did you see her I'm bragging of. I tell you she is ■ goddess, Emanuel ! ” he cried energetically, getting up in his excitement, and pacing up and down the room ; “ a goddess even you would bow the knee to, had you but the privilege of knowing her. Such a walk, such a figure, such grace in every motion, and oh, Emanuel, such a subtle, bewildering, intoxicating way of smiling at you, to drive a man out of his senses ! Give me such a woman, and to win her love but for a day and a night a man might gladly give his life, I say. ”

“ Why, I declare, head over heels in love, and ‘ mad as a herring ! ’ ” said Emanuel. “ Come, tell us all about it, as no doubt you are dying to, and perhaps, as I've some experience in these delicate matters, I can be of use to you. First of all, who is this smiling divinity, Leopold ? ”

“ Oh ! ” said Sontheim, mysteriously, “ she's a very great lady ; here's the proof, so don't think I'm raving ” ; and he went to a wooden chest standing in a corner of the room, and doing duty for several pieces of furniture in one. Having unlocked it he took out a morocco case, then producing a small gold key, which he wore on a black silk cord next to his heart, he unlocked this also, and, to his friend's astonishment, revealed a complete set of the most effulgent diamonds: brooch, earrings, necklace, bracelets, and all. They seemed to emit light of their own as they flashed on the sordid surroundings of the professorial abode. Emanuel took the necklace, and holding the stones to the light, eyed them critically, then said, “ You're right ; they're splendid indeed, and

of the purest water. Many such sets have I seen, flashing round me on fair shoulders, in the capitals where I've played. The lady to whom this belongs is, or has been, very rich, no doubt about it!" His words apparently recalled some painful memory or other, judging from the contraction of his brows and the slight start he gave, as again looking at the jewels, he said, with a certain forced levity of manner: "By the way, you have not told me the name of your charmer yet. Although one of the divinities, she ■ not Venus Anonyma, I suppose?"

"Though you neither deserve to know her name nor anything else about this most beautiful of women, still I will have pity on your benighted condition, and condescend to illumine your darkness a little. You must know," said Sontheim, emphatically rubbing his hands, "that she is none of your trumpery German nobility, with inordinate pretensions and nothing to back them with, but a real, great Countess, and no mistake!"

"A Countess?" said Emanuel, with a certain feverish impatience in his tone, tapping the floor with his foot; "Why in the devil's name can't you tell me her name, then?"

Sontheim, whose own excitement prevented his noticing that of his friend, said, "What's in a name, old fellow? What can it signify to you what she's called? However, there's no mystery about it; if you must know, she's the Countess Staraja."

Emanuel, drawing a deep breath, sounding suspiciously like a breath of relief, handed the brilliants back to the Professor, and said, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye: "But you've not told me how those valuable stones came into your possession, Leopold; you have not turned pawnbroker in addition to your other avocations, have you? Besides, goddesses are above pecuniary embarrassments, I suppose?"

"Oh, for shame!" cried Sontheim, "you unbelieving Thomas, you! tremble lest she reveal herself some day to you in her god-head. I won't keep you on the rack of expectation any longer, however, and may as well tell you," he continued, with an air of vast importance, carefully putting the diamonds back in their case, which he locked, "that I am this very day going to Frankfurt, either to Ladenburg's bank or Goldschmidt's to raise 50,000 florins on these jewels."

"Then she's after all only like one of us prosaic creatures, and has outrun her account at the banker's," said Emanuel, with a

mock-heroic expression. "Ah, why did you raise an illusion but to destroy it, Leopold?"

"I assure you it's not at all a thing to joke about," said Sontheim; "the fact is that this heavenly creature—so I concluded from some casual allusions of hers—had had serious differences with her lord, a crabbed, jealous old brute, no doubt, and so preferred eschewing his company for a time, living in the meanwhile, mind you, in a retirement strict enough for a nun."

"Where gods are in question miracles are sure to follow!" put in Emanuel.

"Well, you see," continued Sontheim, throwing himself well back, and expanding his chest, "by some tremendous piece of good luck the Countess Staraja comes to me with a letter of recommendation from her man of business (who once passed a few days in this town), so I have the felicity of rendering her some trifling service. I also flatter myself" (here he managed to infuse an extraordinary amount of knowingness into his small blue eyes) "that I succeeded in whiling away some of the leisure moments of this glorious woman—well, let's not dwell on that—when one day she sends for me in distress and perplexity—think of it!—her husband is dying, and she says she must instantly start for Russia."

"For Russia!" exclaimed Emanuel, giving his friend a quick look.

"Yes; didn't I tell you that she was a Russian Countess?" asked the Professor.

"Never mind," said Emanuel, who had recovered from his momentary uneasiness of manner; "go on with your story."

"Well, fancy the delight of being of some use to the beautiful Countess!" cried Sontheim. "Not prepared for the emergency, she wants ready money of course; asks me to sell these diamonds for her in the course of a few hours (like all women she has no conception of business, you see), and when I explain that that is impossible in a small town like ours, she consents to accept the money from me, and leaves these stones to raise money upon, so that I may recoup myself and pay all her outstanding debts with. If I am not mistaken she was not insensible to my devoted exertions in her cause. After all," he went on, excitedly, his face gradually getting as red as his hair, "the qualities women most value in men are energy and manliness and——" he broke off suddenly, and turning abruptly to Emanuel said, with a world of meaning in his look and tone—"She may be a widow now,"

"And have you heard from her lately?" asked Emanuel.

A certain confusion might have been detected in the Professor's manner as, bending over the table, he said, in a rather less elated tone than hitherto :

"No, I cannot say that I have."

"Well, you cannot expect a goddess to observe the ordinary rules of politeness," said Emanuel, rather sardonically ; "but, my dear Leopold, I am more concerned than I——"

But before he had time to finish the door opened, and the lady of whom he had caught a cursory view at an earlier hour now entered boldly in the consciousness of carefully adjusted curls and a gaudy Scotch plaid dress. Smirking and curtsying to Emanuel, and apologising for her intrusion, she asked her brother, with a certain querulousness of tone, whether he still had the intention of starting for Frankfort at one o'clock, for in that case she must know how long he intended remaining, on account of the clothes that he'd want to take with him.

"Men of learning," she said, looking at Emanuel with a killing smile, "always treat these sublunary details with scorn, and yet no one is more put out than they if everything does not go as smoothly as on wheels."

"Very true, dear Madam," said Emanuel, with a courteous inclination of the head. "I have no doubt this big fellow here gives you no end of trouble to keep in order."

"Ah! no one knows what it is keeping house for a great scholar like that, dear Sir," said Frau Scherer, casting her eyes up to the ceiling in an interestingly plaintive manner.

"Well, well, you may abuse me another time to our friend, Pauline ; but come along now and let's attend to the packing. You won't mind amusing yourself with my books till I come back, will you, Emanuel? And we'll walk to the stage coach together. By the way, here's an interesting treatise by a man who thinks he has found a key to the unity of language, that you may like to look at," cried Sontheim, eagerly fishing out a thin, mean-looking pamphlet from under a pile of books.

"No, no ; I'll none of your etymologies or philologies ; they are the worst of bogies to me. Here's something will suit me better," said Emanuel, seizing upon a translation of Hafiz which had just been published, as the others left the room.

## COHEN OF TRINITY

By AMY LEVY

Amy Levy, born in London, 1861, died there 1889. She wrote verse before the age of eight, which gave evidence of high literary talent. "By the time she had entered her 'teens she had produced a considerable number of verses, essays, plays and short stories, characterised by a steady and rapid increase in significance and power," said Joseph Jacobs.

In a paper read before the Jewish Historical Society of England in 1926, Miss Beth Zion Lask claimed her as "our greatest contributor to English literature" (apparently Jewish women writers in England). "She died in the heyday of her career"—she continues. "What she left as completed work is stamped with that touch of genius that no other English Jewess has equalled or surpassed . . . the greatest Jewess England has thus far produced."

Amy Levy's first collection of verse appeared in 1881, a defence of Socrates' wife and her version of her life with the philosopher. It bears the impress of the feminist movement. Among her essays was one in the "Jewish Chronicle" in 1886 on "The Jew in Fiction." Two years later she published her novel of Jewish life, "Reuben Sachs." "It is a story with an object: to stop the gross materialism so rife in the Jewry she knew. The 'Cambridge Review' declared that 'Reuben Sachs' was written in vitriol. It was written in something more powerful, more enduring—in her own life's blood."

"Cohen of Trinity" which appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine," was written only a few months before she died, by her own hand, at the age of twenty-eight. Two weeks before, she had spent a few days with Olive Schreiner, who afterwards wrote to Havelock Ellis: "I was always trying to cheer up Amy Levy, and professing that I found life so delightful and worth living. I've felt since that, if I'd been more sympathetic to her melancholy mood I might have done more for her. In her last note to me she said, 'You care for science and art and helping your fellow-men, therefore life is worth living to you; to me it is worth nothing!'"

Dr. Richard Garnett wrote a sympathetic notice of Amy Levy for the "Dictionary of National Biography," and a lengthy obituary notice by Oscar Wilde appeared in the "Woman's World."

THE news of poor Cohen's death came to me both as a shock and as a surprise.

■ is true that, in his melodramatic, self-conscious fashion, he had often declared a taste for suicide to be among the characteristics of his versatile race. And, indeed, in the Cambridge days, or in that obscure interval which elapsed between the termination of his unfortunate University career and the publication of *Gubernator*, there would have been nothing astonishing in such an act on his part. But now, when his book was in everyone's hands, his name on everyone's lips, when that recognition for which he had longed was so completely his; that success for which he had thirsted was poured out for him in so generous a draught—to turn away, to vanish without a word of explanation (he was so fond of explaining himself) is the very last thing one would have expected of him.

## I

He came across the meadows towards the sunset, his upturned face pushed forwards catching the light, and glowing also with another radiance than the rich, reflected glory of the heavens.

A curious figure; slight, ungainly; shoulders in the ears; an awkward, rapid gait, half slouch, half hobble. One arm with its coarse hand swung like a bell-rope as he went; the other pressed a book close against his side, while the hand belonging to it held a few bulrushes and marsh marigolds.

Behind him streamed his shabby gown—it was a glorious afternoon of May—and his dusty trencher-cap pushed to the back of his head revealed clearly the oval contour of the face, the full, prominent lips, full, prominent eyes, and the curved beak of the nose with its restless nostrils.

"Who is he?" I asked of my companion, one of the younger dons. "Cohen of Trinity."

He shook his head. The man had come up on a scholarship, but had entirely failed to follow up this preliminary distinction. He was no good, no good at all. He was idle, he was incompetent, he led a bad life in a bad set.

We passed on to other subjects, and out of sight passed the uncouth figure with the glowing face, the evil reputation, and that strange suggestion of latent force which clung to him.

The next time I saw Cohen was a few days later in Trinity quad. There were three or four men with him—little Cleaver of Sidney,

and others of the same pattern. He was yelling and shrieking with laughter—at some joke of his own, apparently—and his companions were joining in the merriment.

Something in his attitude suggested that he was the ruling spirit of the group, that he was indeed enjoying the delights of addressing an audience, and appreciated to the full the advantages of the situation.

I came across him next morning, hanging moodily over King's Bridge, a striking contrast to the exuberant figure of yesterday.

He looked yellow and flaccid as a sucked lemon, and eyed the water flowing between the bridges with a suicidal air that its notorious shallowness made ridiculous.

Little Cleaver came up to him and threw out a suggestion of lecture.

Cohen turned round with a self-conscious, sham-tragedy air, gave a great guffaw, and roared out by way of answer the quotation from *Tom Cobb* :

"The world's a beast, and I hate it!"

## II

By degrees I scraped acquaintance with Cohen, who had interested me from the first.

I cannot quite explain my interest on so slight a knowledge ; his manners were a distressing mixture of the *bourgeois* and the *canaille*, and a most unattractive lack of simplicity marked his whole personality. There never indeed existed between us anything that could bear the name of friendship. Our relations are easily stated ; he liked to talk about himself, and I liked to listen.

I have sometimes reproached myself that I never grew fond of him ; but a little reciprocity is necessary in these matters, and poor Cohen had not the art of being fond of people.

I soon discovered that he was desperately lonely and desperately unapproachable.

Once he quoted to me, with reference to himself, the lines from Browning :

. . . Hath spied an icy fish  
That longed to 'scape the rock-stream where she lived,  
And thaw herself within the lukewarm waves  
O' the lazy sea. . . .

Only she ever sickened, found repulse  
At the other kind of water not her life,  
Flounced back from bliss she was not born to breathe,  
And in her old bonds buried her despair,  
Hating and loving warmth alike.

Of the men with whom I occasionally saw him—men who would have been willing enough to be his friends—he spoke with an open contempt that did him little credit, considering how unscrupulously he made use of them when his loneliness grew intolerable. There were others, too, besides Cleaver and his set, men of a coarser stamp—boon companions, as the story-books say—with whom, when the fit was on, he consented to herd.

But as friends, as permanent companions even, he rejected them, one and all, with a magnificence, an arrogant and bitter scorn that had in it a distinctly comic element.

I saw him once, to my astonishment, with Norwood, and it came out that he had the greatest admiration for Norwood and his set.

What connection there could be between those young puritans, aristocrats and scholars, the flower of the University—if prigs, a little, and *bornés*—and a man of Cohen's way of life, it would be hard to say.

In aspiring to their acquaintance one scarcely knew if to accuse the man of insane vanity or a pathetic hankering after better things.

Little Leuniger, who played the fiddle, a Jew, was the fashion at that time among them; but he resolutely turned the cold shoulder to poor Cohen, who, I believe, deeply resented this in his heart, and never lost an opportunity of hurling a bitterness at his compatriot.

A desire to stand well in one another's eyes, to make a brave show before one another, is, I have observed, a marked characteristic of the Jewish people.

As for little Leuniger, he went his way, and contented himself with saying that Cohen's family were not people that one "knew."

On the subject of his family, Cohen himself, at times savagely reserved, at others appallingly frank, volunteered little information, though on one occasion he had touched in with a few vivid strokes the background of his life.

I seemed to see it all before me: the little new house in Maida Vale; a crowd of children, clamorous, unkempt; a sallow shrew

in a torn dressing-gown who alternately scolded, bewailed herself, and sank into moody silence ; a fitful paternal figure coming and going, depressed, exhilarated according to the fluctuations of his mysterious financial affairs ; and over everything the fumes of smoke, the glare of gas, the smell of food in preparation.

But, naturally enough, it was as an individual, not as the member of a family, that Cohen cared to discuss himself.

There was, indeed, a force, an exuberance, a robustness, about his individuality that atoned—to the curious observer at least—for the presence of certain of the elements which helped to compose it. His unbounded arrogance, his enormous pretensions, alternating with and tempered by a bitter self-depreciation, overflowing at times into self-reviling, impressed me, even while amusing and disgusting me.

It seemed that a frustrated sense of power, a disturbing consciousness of some blind force which sought an outlet, lurked within him, and allowed him no rest.

Of his failure at his work he spoke often enough, scoffing at academic standards, yet writhing at his own inability to come up to them.

"On my honour," he said to me once, "I can't do better, and that's the truth. Of course, you don't believe it ; no one believes it. It's all a talk of wasted opportunities, squandered talents—but, before God, that part of my brain which won the scholarship has clean gone."

I pointed out to him that his way of life was not exactly calculated to encourage the working mood.

"Mood!" he shouted with a loud, exasperated laugh. "[Mood! I tell you there's a devil in my brain and in my blood and heaven knows where it is leading me."

It led him this way and that all hours of the day and night.

The end of the matter was not difficult to foresee, and I told him so plainly.

This sobered him a little and he was quiet for three days, lying out on the grass with a lexicon and a pile of Oxford classics.

On the fourth the old mood was upon him and he rushed about like a hunted thing from dawn to sunset, winding up with an entertainment which threatened his position as a member of the University.

He got off this time, however, but I shall never forget his face

the next morning as he blustered loudly past Norwood and Blount in Trinity Street.

If he neglected his own work he did, as far as could be seen, no other, unless fits of voracious and promiscuous reading may be allowed to count as such. I suspected him of writing verses, but on this matter of writing he always maintained, curiously enough, a profound reserve.

What I had for some time foreseen as inevitable at length came to pass. Cohen disappeared at a short notice from the University, no choice being given him in the matter.

I went off to his lodgings directly the news of his sentence reached me, but the bird had already flown, leaving no trace behind of its whereabouts.

As I stood in the dismantled little room, always untidy, but now littered from end to end with torn and dusty papers, there rose before my mind the vision of Cohen as I had first seen him in the meadows, with the bulrushes in his hand, the book beneath his arm, and on his face, which reflected the sunset, the radiance of a secret joy.

### III

I did not see *Gubernator* till it was in its fourth edition, some three months after its publication and five years after the expulsion of Cohen from Trinity.

The name, Alfred Lazarus Cohen, printed in full on the title-page, revealed what had never before occurred to me, the identity of the author of that much-talked-of book with my unfortunate college acquaintance. I turned over the leaves with a new curiosity, and, it must be added, a new distrust. By and by I ceased from this cursory, tentative inspection, I began at the beginning and finished the book at a sitting.

Everyone knows *Gubernator* by now, and I have no intention of describing it. Half poem, half essay, wholly unclassifiable, with a force, a fire, a vision, a vigour and felicity of phrase that carried you through its most glaring inequalities, its most appalling lapses of taste, the book fairly took the reader by storm.

Here was a clear case of figs from thistles.

I grew anxious to know how Cohen was bearing himself under his success, which must surely have satisfied, for the time being at

There was growing up, naturally enough, among some of us Cambridge men a sense that Cohen had been hardly used, that (I do not think this was the case) he had been unjustly treated at the University. Lord Norwood, whom I came across one day at the club, remarked that no doubt his widespread popularity would more than atone to Cohen for the flouting he had met with at the hands of Alma Mater. He had read *Gubernator*; it was clever, but the book repelled him, just as the man, poor fellow, had always repelled him. The subject did not seem to interest him, and he went off shortly afterwards with Blount and Leuniger.

A week later I met Cohen at a club dinner, given by a distinguished man of letters. There were present notabilities of every sort—literary, dramatic, artistic—but the author of *Gubernator* was the lion of the evening. He rose undeniably to the situation, and roared as much as was demanded of him. His shrill, uncertain voice, pitched in a loud excited key, shot this way and that across the table. His strange, flexible face, with the full, prominent lips, glowed and quivered with animation. Surely this was his hour of triumph.

He had recognised me at once, and after dinner came round to me, his shoulders in his ears as usual, holding out his hand with a beaming smile. He talked of Cambridge, of one or two mutual acquaintances without embarrassment. He could not have been less abashed if he had wound up his career at the University amid the cheers of an enthusiastic Senate-house.

When the party broke up he came over to me again and suggested that I should go back with him to his rooms. He had never had much opinion of me, as he had been at no pains to conceal, and I concluded that he was in a mood for unbosoming himself. But it seemed that I was wrong, and he walked back to

Great Russell Street, where he had two large, untidy rooms, almost in silence. He told me that he was living away from his family, an unexpected legacy having given him independence.

"So the Fates aren't doing it by halves?" I remarked, in answer to this communication.

"Oh, no," he replied, with a certain moody irony, staring hard at me over his cigar.

"Do you know what success means?" he asked suddenly, and in the question I seemed to hear Cohen the *poseur*, always at the elbow of, and not always to be distinguished from, Cohen stark-nakedly revealed.

"Ah, no, indeed."

"It means—inundation by the second-rate."

"What does the fellow want?" I cried, uncertain as to the extent of his seriousness.

"I never," he said, "was a believer in the half-loaf theory."

"It strikes me, Cohen, that your loaf looks uncommonly like a whole one, as loaves go on this unsatisfactory planet."

He burst into a laugh.

"Nothing," he said presently, "can alter the relations of things—their permanent, essential relations. . . . 'They *shall* know, they *shall* understand, they *shall* feel what I am.' That is what I used to say to myself in the old days. I suppose, now, 'they' do know, more or less, and what of that?"

"I should say the difference from your point of view was a very great one. But you always chose to cry for the moon."

"Well," he said, quietly looking up, "it's the only thing worth having."

I was struck afresh by the man's insatiable demands, which looked at times like a passionate striving after perfection, yet went side by side with the crudest vanity, the most vulgar desire for recognition.

I rose soon after his last remark, which was delivered with a simplicity and an air of conviction which made one cease to suspect the mountebank; we shook hands and bade one another good-night.

I never saw Cohen again.

Ten days after our renewal of acquaintance he sent a bullet through his brain, which, it was believed, must have caused

instantaneous death. That small section of the public which interests itself in books discussed the matter for three days, and the jury returned the usual verdict. I have confessed that I was astonished, that I was wholly unprepared by my knowledge of Cohen for the catastrophe. Yet now and then an inkling of his motive, a dim, fleeting sense of what may have prompted him to the deed, has stolen in upon me.

In his hour of victory the sense of defeat had been strongest. Is it, then, possible that, amid the warring elements of that discordant nature, the battling forces of that ill-starved ill-compounded entity, there lurked, clear-eyed and ever-watchful, a baffled idealist ?

## THE BREAD ON THE WATERS

By ALFRED SUTRO

Alfred Sutro, O.B.E., born 1863. Educated City of London School and Brussels. Married Esther Stella Isaacs, sister of Lord Reading. One of the most important English dramatists. Principal Plays : "The Walls of Jericho," "A Marriage Has Been Arranged," "John Glayde's Honour," "The Perfect Lover," "A Maker of Men," "The Builder of Bridges," "The Laughing Lady," "The Great Well," "Far Above Rubies," "A Man with a Heart," "The Desperate Lovers," "Living Together." "Foolish Virgins," a volume of short stories. Translated Maeterlinck's "Wisdom and Destiny," "Life of the Bee," etc.

MISS MARRISDAILE was conscious of a pricking sensation in her throat, but she restrained herself.

"I could stop in my bedroom, you know, dear——" urged Miss Hartopp plaintively.

"It would fidget me, Lucy," replied Miss Marrisdaile, straining a smile to cover her impatience. "And this flat of ours is such a handbox, one can hear every word——"

Miss Hartopp raised protesting hands.

"Oh, Morrie, you don't think I would listen !"

Again Miss Marrisdaile essayed her wan, deprecating smile.

"Of course not, Lucy. What an idea ! But the mere notion that another person is within earshot—don't you see ?—is disconcerting, that's all. And as I haven't the faintest conception of what he can want of me, or why he should ask to see me alone——"

Miss Hartopp giggled.

"I'm sure that he means to——"

"My dear Lucy, don't be absurd ! I had lost sight of him for ten or twelve years till I met him the other day. But it fidgets me, and I shall be more comfortable, that's all. Besides, you owe the Wilsons a visit——"

"As if they ever wanted to see me !"

"That's the mistake you make—you're becoming hypochondriacal, my child—and it's bad at your time of life."

Miss Hartopp's pale blue eyes turned misty, and her chin trembled.

"I'm only two years older than you, Morvenna."

"At *our* time of life, then. Buck up, Lucy, for God's sake! After all, we're not fossils. Go and see the Wilsons, and be bright and cheerful; you can if you like. Good heavens! they ask you to dinner, and that's worth something."

"They send me down with the parson," complained Miss Hartopp.

"A parson's better than nothing," answered her friend. "Our banquets at home aren't so remarkably festive that you can afford to quarrel with half your visiting list. Go, now, like a good girl."

Miss Hartopp smiled weakly, and fumbled at her gloves.

"Is my hat all right, Morrie?"

"Quite; it looks very well."

"Do you think I was wise to alter the ribbon?"

"Yes; it's better that way."

"If only it doesn't rain——"

"My dear, you have an umbrella."

"If a drop or two falls on that hat it will be ruined."

"The sun's shining, Lucy; there'll be no rain to-day."

"You think not? I saw quite a black cloud while I was dressing. Shall I take an omnibus, do you think, or the underground?"

Miss Marrisdaile heaved a deep sigh, and her foot tapped the floor.

"I should take whichever was nearest," she answered shortly.

Her friend was reproachful

"Oh, Morrie, that's so like you! When you know that my face gets greasy if I have to walk in the sun!"

Miss Marrisdaile looked round the room before she spoke.

"Mrs. Wilson won't bother about your face, Lucy."

"But I shall. I shall feel uncomfortable. Besides, there might be somebody there. Though I've rubbed a bit of cream on my handkerchief, and while the servant's opening the door——"

"Exactly; so that's all right. You had better go now, dear. Good-bye."

Miss Hartopp offered her cheek.

"I wish you would take a little more interest in me, Morrie."

"Lucy, Lucy, don't be silly!"

"I know you're quite indifferent as to how I look. Of course, it's all right for you, with your complexion——"

"Are you going?"

It had escaped her, and she couldn't help it. Miss Hartopp gave a startled look, and with an "Oh, Morrie!" she fluttered away; the outer door opened and closed, and rustling skirts flounced down the stairs.

Morvenna drew a deep breath, and her hand gripped a chair, seized it, and shook it. . . . Then her eyes turned to the tiny clock on the mantelpiece.

"Four already," she murmured. "He'll be here in half an hour"; and she went hurriedly to her bedroom. . . .

Mr. Chambers found the ascent of the five floors fatiguing; and puffed considerably when he attained the last landing. He was a pleasant-looking man of forty-two or three, a trifle corpulent, and by no means of distinguished appearance; but he had kind grey eyes, and a certain air of strength somewhat corrected his massiveness. He paused for a moment as he stood outside: then he pressed the bell, and stared curiously at the door which was opened by Miss Marrisdaile herself.

"How do you do, Mr. Chambers?" She had schooled her voice; it rang clear, but a tremor was there. "Come in; I'm glad to see you."

He placed his hat and stick in the rack, and followed her into the room.

"Won't you sit down?"

Mr. Chambers let himself drop into a chair, and there was an instant—a long, long instant it seemed to both—of silence. Then he turned his eyes on his hostess, and jerked out, as though the thought had suddenly come to him:

"Do you know—it struck me the other day—you're not changed a bit?"

Morvenna laughed.

"I'm thirty-five."

"A woman's as old as she looks."

"You haven't changed much either. I *was* surprised when I saw you last week at the Martins'. And how are you?"

"Oh, I'm very well, thanks. You've a nice place here."

"They're not my things, you know, but my friend's. She loves all this bric-a-brac."

"Don't you?"

"Oh, I hate it! The room's small enough, and one can't stir without knocking something or other over. You knew her, by the way. I wonder whether you will remember? Lucy Hartopp——"

"Hartopp? . . . Dear me! a tall, graceful girl, who took such high honours at the University——"

"Yes; we're living together."

"Oh, that must be very pleasant. She's awfully clever, of course—and you always liked clever people."

Miss Marriadaile bowed her head.

"She had what they call brain exhaustion five years ago; she had been working too hard—and was forced to give all that up."

"What a misfortune, poor thing! She was so brilliant."

"Yes; she overtaxed her brain. A woman's brain, it appears, can't stand very much. She had even to abandon her teaching. And now we two live together—for economy."

Mr. Chambers looked his sympathy.

"And you still write, of course? I have read your books, you know."

"What an act of devotion!" She laughed. "I didn't know that you were one of my faithful two hundred."

"Two hundred?"

"Well, I've published three books altogether, and that was the average sale."

"What a shame!"

"I don't know; they were poor stuff, really, although I didn't think so then."

"And I'm sure you don't now. Of course, my opinion's worth nothing, but—why, you had splendid notices!"

"One or two friends on the press spoke very well of them. But at any rate they didn't sell."

"You amaze me—you do indeed! Is that why nothing of yours has come out these last few years?"

"That is the reason. You see, publishers are scarcely philanthropists. I review, when I can induce an editor to send me a book—and I occasionally get a stray poem or story into a magazine."

Mr. Chambers could only say "Oh!" He was evidently very

surprised, and fidgeted uncomfortably in his chair. Miss Marrisdaile broke the silence.

"I was betwixt and between, you see—too good—or too dull—for the ordinary public, and not good enough to appeal to the people who really know. But we won't talk of myself; the subject's not fascinating. How about you?"

"Oh, I'm in business, of course!"

"And, I hope, prosperous."

"Oh yes, I've done very well. It's hard work, but I like it. You see, it's all I'm fit for." He laughed. "As you used to tell me."

Morvenna bit her lips.

"Did I? I was a great fool in those days."

"Not at all; you were quite right. But I never was good at learning. Dear me, how I tried to read—the books that you read!"

He fairly bubbled over at the recollection; then he took a more sombre tone.

"You will have heard of my poor wife's death—a little more than two years ago. . . She wasn't clever, you know; she was like me. But we weren't very happy——"

"I am sorry. . . . You have children?"

"Three—two girls and a boy. How strange it is that we should never have met, all these years, till last week!"

"I go out very seldom."

"I saw you once—at a first night at the *Royalty*. A friend of mine—at least, not exactly a friend, but I had helped him with money—had a piece done, and he gave me a ticket. In the dress-circle, you know—front row. And I saw you down there—in the stalls."

"Why didn't you speak to me?"

"Oh, you seemed to know everybody, and I—hadn't the pluck!" He laughed merrily. "You were such a swell—shaking hands with all the distinguished people in London—and I felt as though 'auctioneer' were written all over me!"

Miss Marrisdaile smiled rather grimly.

"The people weren't perhaps quite as distinguished as you think. Oh, do you know, I'm really very glad to see you, to have met you again; you bring quite a whiff of the old days. It must be about fifteen years ago that you first came to the house with poor Harold. What great friends you were!"

"The best chap I've ever known, that brother of yours."

"Yes, Poor Harold ! My life might have been different if he hadn't died."

"Aren't you happy, then, Morrie ? Oh, I beg your pardon——"

He rose, and looked as though he had done something wrong. She smiled softly at him, and a tinge of faintest pink spread over her cheek.

"I like you to call me Morrie," she said. "Why not ? We're such old friends. We needn't be stiff with each other, Tom."

The man looked at her out of his pleasant eyes, and held out his hand, which she took. Then he sat down again, and heaved a deep sigh of content.

"I'm glad you feel like that," he said ; "it helps me a lot. Oh, yes, we're friends, and I'm a good friend ; I'll say that. And, look here, I'll come to business straight away. You must have been very surprised when you got my letter."

"Well, I was, of course. You told me I could do you a favour. By the way, how did you get my address ?"

"In *Who's Who*."

"What ! have they still got me there ?" she asked. "That's wonderful, too."

He leaned over and beamed at her.

"My dear Morrie, you're a celebrity, and don't seem to know it."

She smiled rather wanly.

"A celebrity ! Well, we won't talk about that ; but I like you to think that I am. And now, what is this favour ?"

Mr. Chambers turned sheepish, and looked almost furtively at her.

"I want to marry again. . . ."

For a moment the room danced in her eyes. The thought she had not dared to formulate, that had been throbbing within her ever since she received his letter, now stared at her, shrieked in her ears. Dear God, it was true, then ! She saw in a flash her solitary, wretched existence now already behind her ; her evenings of dull, bitter pain, her hopeless waking, her pillow wet with powerless, futile tears. The bold front crumbled that she had held to the world ; love, the impossible, for which she had dared no longer even to yearn—love stood there. A man who saw her with the eyes of ten years ago, with eyes that were blind to her wrinkles, her faded hair, her wasted and shrunken figure. A heart on which she could rest her poor, weary heart ; sympathy,

sympathy . . . in the dim future, perhaps even children. . . . And through the mist, the rainbow, her eyes sought him who was hers, her own, her lover, her husband. She beamed on him hungrily ; and all the while her face was rigid and calm, and she heard herself say :

“ So you want to re-marry ? ”

He was swaying about in his chair and cracking his fingers.

“ Yes, Morrie, I do.”

Oh, the luxury of being able to ask herself whether she would take him or not, this man she had so scornfully rejected twelve years ago ! The dear delight, the keen gladness, of pretending to debate ! There was a side of her that marked, with a sneer, his huge hands and feet, his narrow forehead and double chin : that branded him “ tradesman ”—a man who sold chairs and tables, bedroom suites. . . . And she egged on this other self to advance its silly objections, to point out his clumsy boots, and the way he breathed through his mouth ; his entire lack of higher culture, or feeling for art. . . . And in that second of silence she floated on a broad river, and lilies rose up around her and covered her face, and there was music—sweet, happy music—and her soul was singing. Joy overwhelmed her ; she half closed her eyes as she thought of the lips that would soon be kissing her lips, of the shoulder her tired head would lean on, of the arm—the strong, strong arm—that would clasp her waist and scatter her cares. Oh God—dear God—this was good of Thee. At last, and at last !

“ And as she’s a niece of yours, I fancied that you——”

Had she heard ? Was it true ? Was it real ? Rushing waters drowned her ; she felt herself die. Her heart gave one leap and stopped. Miserable tears streamed from her eyes ; all control, all restraint, had left her. She wrung her hands feebly as she sobbed and moaned :

“ I thought you meant me.”

“ Morrie ! ”

He had sprung to his feet, and looked as though he had struck her, had stabbed her. All his roughness was gone ; he shook, and moaned at her grief.

“ Yes, I did. I thought you meant me ! ”

She didn’t care—she didn’t care ! All was too black around her—too black, too black ! The hopeless future caught her again, and crushed her ; she saw the long procession of wretched

to-morrows. Her biting pain broke down every barrier. She didn't care—she didn't care! . . . And then he leaned forward and touched her—and, with a gasp and a cry, she seized hold of the reins, and lifted her head, and smiled.

"Sit down," she said, and her voice rang clear. "Oh, what a pretty exhibition!" She let her tears dry on her cheek, and she waved her hand at him. "It's all right, and it's funny, too. I *did* think you meant me! And—dear Lord!—I should have jumped at you. There! Open confession, you see! What a good fellow you are not to laugh! And now, after this little attack of hysteria—my life is dull, you know, and I suppose I feed on myself—now tell me, which niece is it—which of the two, Hilda or Maggie?"

He could not speak. He had looked into a woman's soul, and its loneliness appalled him; he stood silent as before the dead. His fingers twitched; all that was unconscious within him was striving for utterance, clamouring to pierce the wall. He could only murmur:

"Morrie! Morrie!"

Miss Marrisdaile was quite calm now.

"My dear Tom," she said, "sit down. Collect yourself." And she laughed. "With your leave we'll forget all this. I was rather rude to you, I believe, twelve years ago, very disdainful and haughty—heaven knows why!—and you've had your revenge."

"Oh, Morrie! revenge!"

"Let us call it poetic justice. But, mercy! see what a hostess I am! I've forgotten the tea. Stop there; I'll bring it. We've no maid."

She went; and came back in ten minutes, bearing a tray, of which he relieved her; and she poured out the tea, and gave him a cup, and sipped her own, calmly. All her old brave reliance had returned to her; and she had smoothed her hair, and her eyes bore not a trace of their tears.

"My dear Tom," she began, "you've a very good heart—you always did have—and I see I've upset you. Oddly enough, I'm not half as ashamed as I should be. I feel that I owed it you somehow; I *was* such an arrant fool when I was a girl! And this thing makes a link between us; we'll always be friends. And now let's be sober and serious, and talk over your affairs."

Mr. Chambers got up, and held out his hand.

"I think I had rather——"

"You needn't. I assure you it's quite all right now. My dear man, I did have a mad sort of notion—but I knew it was mad. If you leave me now without telling me, I shall feel horribly ashamed. If you are, as I take you to be, my honest and faithful friend—and I assure you I want a friend—you will forget my hysterical folly, and sit down, and quietly discuss things." He paused for a moment, but her smile reassured him; he went back to his chair. "That's right! And now which ■ it, Hilda or Maggie?"

Mr. Chambers turned very red.

"Oh, I——" he murmured, and stopped.

"Come, come," urged Miss Marriadaile, "you must tell me. I imagine it's Hilda."

He nodded shamefacedly.

"She's the prettier of the two, of course. Does she know?"

He cleared his throat.

"I fancy she has some idea——"

"Tell me, why did you want my advice, or opinion?"

"Well, she's only twenty, and I'm forty-three. And I've a sort of suspicion, at times, that her mother . . . may be putting some pressure upon the girl. . . ."

Miss Marriadaile toyed with her spoon. Hilda! Hilda's mother had married when her sister was little more than a child. She had fallen vaguely in love with a clerk in the City, and had led a discontented and reproachful existence ever since. There had never been much sympathy between the sisters, and they met but rarely. And Hilda had inherited the feeble prettiness of her mother, the feeble intelligence too; she was vapid, foolish, caring only for dances, tennis, amusement, her one anxiety to "marry well." What sort of a wife would Hilda make for this honest, simple man? And her eyes signalled warning, but her woman's loyalty held her back; she could not spoil the girl's chance—her niece, after all. . . . And besides, what would he want of his wife? She would give him all he would want, perhaps—Hilda, that little goose, with her pink and white face, and her fat, foolish eyes! Oh! men—men!

"What do you think?" asked Tom Chambers.

"How old are your children?"

"The boy's nine, and the girls seven and four," he replied. "They're dear little things, and very affectionate. But they need a mother, you know."

A mother! Oh, she would have loved them! She would have taken these orphans to her heart—her lonely heart that had nothing to care for!

"Hilda's a bit young, of course. You're twenty years older. That's the only objection I see, and it isn't a grave one."

Yes, the face—the face, that was all they cared for! Hilda to educate children, Hilda who devoured novelettes, and had not an idea in her head!

"Of course, she's young," said Mr. Chambers. "And I feel that it's just a bit foolish. But the fact is, you see——"

"You're in love with her?"

His sheepish look gave the answer; she crossed her hands on her lap, and smiled.

"Then marry her, my dear man! Be her master, that's all, and don't believe that because she's young, and you're not, she's making a magnificent sacrifice. The girl's all right. She needs guidance, of course, but you'll see to that. Marry her, by all means. You might do much worse. Let me see, I'll be your aunt!" and she laughed pleasantly at him.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Morrie?"

"Nothing, nothing, except—though I don't think I need ask it—never to let Hilda know."

"You need not ask it." He was reproachful.

"No, I feel that. Well——"

She made the half-gesture, as though to imply that the conference was ended. But he did not rise.

"I'm afraid you're not happy," he said.

"Happy!" She smiled. "Don't take an advantage over me, Tom. I showed myself to you as I have never done before, or shall again, to a living soul. You asked me to marry you twelve years ago, and I wouldn't; and I'm an old maid—a dreary, fusty old maid. That's all. I wrote poetry, and thought that was life. Two or three men besides you made me offers. I talked of art, and scorned domesticity. I didn't know then that art meant living with Lucy Hartopp, and dining off tea and a boiled egg, and having nothing in this world to do or care for."

"Then your books——"

"Don't you see? I know nothing of life, or real men or women. When I was young, and a fool, I wrote about delirious love, and blinding passion, and fustian like that. I thought I was a genius. Yes, I did, you know—it's a fact. I was half baked, as all women are who exclusively live by the brain. And I've got just what I deserved. That's all. It's not worth making a fuss about—and I don't, as a rule."

"You're still quite young—it's not too late——"

He felt he had bungled, and blushed. She only smiled.

"Everything's too late for me, Tom. At least, I've this much to be grateful for—my father left me a hundred a year, and I make another fifty or so by my writing."

"Fifty!"

He stared his amazement.

"Did you think I was rolling in wealth? Oh, I can tell you there are thousands of single women who'd give ten years of their life to be as well off as that! Lucy has a hundred a year too—they gave her a pension—and we club together. Of course, it's not luxury, but at least we have this place, which is home of a sort, and need not pinch or scrape too much. Oh, things might be a good deal worse!"

"You don't keep a servant?"

"We've a woman who comes in the morning. It's comfortable enough. And Lucy's a very good cook. Poor thing, it's all she can do!"

"Can I help you in any way, Morrie?" he asked, very gently.

"Not in the least, my dear friend. Go and propose to Hilda. I shall be at the wedding, of course."

"And you'll come to see us?"

"Oh yes; why not?"

Go to see them! See Hilda there!

"Good-bye, then." He rose. "You'll remember—if there's anything I ever can do for you——"

"Oh yes, I'll remember."

She held out her hand. He insisted:

"Anything, anything. And see"—he fished out a card—"this is my business address. A word sent to me there——"

"That's nice of you, Tom. Oh yes, if I ever should want you or you me—who knows?—we can count on each other. And I hope you'll be very happy. Oh, I hope it with all my heart!"

They stood for a moment and looked into each other's eyes ; then shook hands, and he went, and she heard him fumbling for his hat and stick in the dark little hall ; then the outer door closed, and Miss Marrisdaile sat in her chair, and stared at her empty tea-cup.

## THE SABBATH BREAKER

By ISRAEL ZANGWILL

Israel Zangwill, born London, 1864, died 1926. The most important and most internationally famous Jewish author of the century. A pioneer, a wit, a man of unflinching courage and independence, novelist, dramatist, poet, essayist, political leader, humanist. A man of intense vitality and human sympathies. His works have been published in twenty languages, including Japanese. "Children of the Ghetto" (1892) made him world-famous. His "Ghetto Tragedies," "Ghetto Comedies," "Dreamers of the Ghetto," "King of the Schnorrers," "Melting Pot," and other Jewish books are classics. In general literature, too, he has done splendid work. "The Master," "The Mantle of Elijah," "The Grey Wig," "Jinny the Carrier," "The War God," are works of outstanding importance. His essays, "Without Prejudice," "The Voice of Jerusalem," "Italian Fantasies," "The War for the World," are powerful, fearless, witty, inspired. "It is not easy to find in English literature such abundant wit and humour, such delight in mental quips, puns and tricks of thought and phrase," said Holbrook Jackson. His translations from the medieval Hebrew poets published in the Jewish Festival prayer books are beautifully and powerfully done.

Zangwill was in the Zionist movement from the start, and afterwards became the President of the Jewish Territorial Organisation. He was in the forefront of the Women's Suffrage movement when it was unpopular and jeered at, he was in the Union of Democratic Control when to oppose the war was dangerous. He spoke at numerous meetings for all unpopular causes, and for the under dog, and his tongue was as witty and devastating as his pen.

Some of his short stories have been described (by St. John Adcock) as "for their delicate art and simple directness of narrative, among the greatest in the language." "The Sabbath-Breaker" is a gem among Zangwill's short stories.

THE moment came near for the Polish centenarian grandmother to die. From the doctor's statement it appeared she had only a bad quarter of an hour to live. Her attack had been sudden, and the grandchildren she loved to scold could not be present.

She had already battled through the great wave of pain and was

drifting beyond the boundaries of her earthly refuge. The nurses, forgetting the trouble her querulousness and her overweening dietary scruples had cost them, hung over the bed on which the shrivelled entity lay. They did not know she was living again through the one great episode of her life.

Nearly forty years back, when (although already hard upon seventy and a widow) a Polish village was all her horizon, she received a letter. It arrived on the eve of Sabbath on a day of rainy summer. It was from her little boy—her only boy—who kept a country inn seven and thirty miles away, and had a family. She opened the letter with feverish anxiety. Her son—her *Kaddish*—was the apple of her eye. The old woman eagerly perused the Hebrew script, from right to left. Then weakness overcame her and she nearly fell.

Embedded casually enough in the four pages was a passage that stood out for her in letters of blood. "I am not feeling very well lately; the weather is so oppressive and the nights are misty. But it is nothing; my digestion is a little out of order, that's all." There were roubles for her in the letter, but she let them fall to the floor unheeded. Panic fear, travelling quicker than the tardy post of those days, had brought rumour of a sudden outbreak of cholera in her son's district. Already alarm for her boy had surged about her heart all day; the letter confirmed her worst apprehensions. Even if the first touch of the cholera-fiend was not actually on him when he wrote, still he was by his own confession in that condition in which the disease takes easiest grip. By this time he was on a bed of sickness—nay, perhaps on his deathbed, if not dead. Even in those days the little grandmother had lived beyond the common span; she had seen many people die, and knew that the Angel of Death does not always go about his work leisurely. In an epidemic his hands are too full to enable him to devote much attention to each case. Maternal instinct tugged at her heart strings, drawing her toward her boy. The end of the letter seemed impregnated with special omen—"Come and see me soon, dear little mother. I shall be unable to get to you for some time." Yes, she must go at once—who knew but that it would be the last time she would look upon his face?

But then came a terrible thought to give her pause. The Sabbath was just "in"—a moment ago. Driving, riding, or any

manner of journeying was prohibited during the next twenty-four hours. Frantically she reviewed the situation. Religion permitted the violation of the Sabbath on one condition—if life was to be saved. By no stretch of logic could she delude herself into the belief that her son's recovery hinged upon her presence—nay, analysing the case with the cruel remorselessness of a scrupulous conscience, she saw his very illness was only a plausible hypothesis. No ; to go to him now were beyond question to profane the Sabbath.

And yet beneath all the reasoning, her conviction that he was sick unto death, her resolve to set out at once, never wavered. After an agonising struggle she compromised. She could not go by cart—that would be to make others work into the bargain, and would, moreover, involve a financial transaction. She must walk ! Sinful as it was to transgress the limit of two thousand yards beyond her village—the distance fixed by Rabbinical law—there was no help for it. And of all the forms of travelling, walking was surely the least sinful. The Holy One, blessed be He, would know she did not mean to work ; perhaps in His mercy He would make allowance for an old woman who had never profaned His rest-day before.

And so, that very evening, having made a hasty meal, and lodged the precious letter in her bosom, the little grandmother girded up her loins to walk the seven and thirty miles. No staff took she with her, for to carry such came under the Talmudical definition of work. Neither could she carry an umbrella, though it was a season of rain. Mile after mile she strode briskly on, toward that pallid face that lay so far beyond the horizon, and yet ever shone before her eyes like a guiding star. "I am coming, my lamb," she muttered. "The little mother is on the way."

It was a muggy night. The sky, flushed with a weird, hectic glamour, seemed to hang over the earth like a pall. The trees that lined the roadway were shrouded in a draggling vapour. At midnight the mist blotted out the stars. But the little grandmother knew the road ran straight. All night she walked through the forest, fearless as Una, meeting neither man nor beast, though the wolf and the bear haunted its recesses, and snakes lurked in the bushes. But only the innocent squirrels darted across her path. The morning found her spent, and almost lame. But she walked on. Almost half the journey was yet to do.

She had nothing to eat with her ; food, too, was an illegal burden, nor could she buy any on the holy day. She said her Sabbath-morning prayer walking, hoping God would forgive the disrespect. The recital gave her partial oblivion of her pains. As she passed through a village, the dreadful rumour of cholera was confirmed ; it gave wings to her feet for ten minutes, then bodily weakness was stronger than everything else, and she had to lean against the hedges of the outskirts of the village. It was nearly noon. A passing beggar gave her a piece of bread. Fortunately it was unbuttered, so she could eat it with only minor qualms lest it had touched any unclean thing. She resumed her journey, but the rest had only made her feet move more painfully and reluctantly. She would have liked to bathe them in a brook, but that, too, was forbidden. She took the letter from her bosom and reperused it, and whipped up her flagging strength with a cry of " Courage, my lamb ! the little mother is on the way." Then the leaden clouds melted into sharp lines of rain, which beat into her face, refreshing her for the first few moments, but soon wetting her to the skin, making her sopped clothes a heavier burden, and reducing the pathway to mud, that clogged still further her feeble footsteps. In the teeth of the wind and the driving shower she limped on. A fresh anxiety consumed her now—would she have strength to hold out ? Every moment her pace lessened, she was moving like a snail. And the slower she went, the more vivid grew her prescience of what awaited her at the journey's end. Would she ever hear his dying word ? Perhaps—terrible thought !—she would only be in time to look upon his dead face ! Mayhap that was how God would punish her for her desecration of the Holy Day ! " Take heart, my lamb," she wailed. " Do not die yet. The little mother comes."

The rain stopped. The sun came out, hot and fierce, and dried her hands and face, and then made them stream again with perspiration. Every inch won was torture now, but the brave feet toiled on. Bruised and swollen and crippled, they toiled on. There was a dying voice—very far off yet, alas !—that called to her, and as she dragged herself along, she replied : " I am coming, my lamb. Take heart ! The little mother is on the way. Courage ! I shall look upon thy face, I shall find thee alive."

Once a waggoner observed her plight and offered her a lift, but she shook her head steadfastly. The endless afternoon wore on—

she crawled along the forest-way, stumbling every now and then from sheer faintness, and tearing her hands and face in the brambles of the roadside. At last the cruel sun waned, and reeking mists rose from the forest pools. And still the long miles stretched away, and still she plodded on, torpid from over-exhaustion, scarcely conscious, and taking each step only because she had taken the preceding. From time to time her lips mumbled, "Take heart, my lamb! I am coming." The Sabbath was "out" ere, broken and bleeding, and all but swooning, the little grandmother crawled up to her son's inn, on the border of the forest. Her heart was cold with fatal foreboding. There was none of the usual Saturday-night litter of Polish peasantry about the door. The sound of many voices weirdly intoning a Hebrew hymn floated out into the night. A man in a caftan opened the door, and mechanically raised his forefinger to bid her enter without noise. The little grandmother saw into the room behind. Her daughter-in-law and her grandchildren were seated on the floor—the seat of mourners.

"Blessed be the true Judge!" she said, and rent the skirt of her dress. "When did he die?"

"Yesterday. We had to bury him hastily ere the Sabbath came in."

The little grandmother lifted up her quavering voice, and joined the hymn. "I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God; upon a harp of ten strings will I sing praises unto Thee."

The nurses could not understand what sudden inflow of strength and impulse raised the mummified figure into a sitting posture. The little grandmother thrust a shrivelled claw into her peaked, shrunken bosom and drew out a paper, crumpled and yellow as herself, covered with strange crabbed hieroglyphics, whose hue had long since faded. She held it close to her bleared eyes—a beautiful light came into them, and illumined the million-puckered face. The lips moved faintly: "I am coming, my lamb," she mumbled. "Courage! The little mother is on the way. I shall look on thy face. I shall find thee alive."

## PRELUDE TO A PINT OF BITTER

By LOUIS ZANGWILL

Louis Zangwill, born in Bristol, in 1869. Younger brother of Israel Zangwill. Lived a good deal abroad, in Holland, France, Italy. His "Drama in Dutch" was one of the successes of 1894. "The World and a Man" combined realism and keen analysis. "The Beautiful Miss Brooke," "A Nineteenth-Century Miracle," "Cleo the Magnificent," "The Syren from Bath," "One's Womenkind" and "An Engagement of Convenience," are among his other works. Has published numerous short stories and essays in many periodicals. Was at one time a brilliant mathematician and a chess player of high rank. There is a legend of how Louis Zangwill took to literature. His brother Israel entertained a number of literary people at their home. Israel wanted to know how they had impressed him but Louis was not in a hero-worshipping mood. Israel said something about sour grapes. Louis insisted that he could write as well. He stayed up all night, and in the morning showed his brother the first chapters of "A Drama in Dutch." Louis Zangwill has also written "The Quest of Spiritual Truth," an essay in Philosophy, and many other important studies in philosophy and aesthetics.

ABOUT the beginning of the reign of King Edward the Seventh, there lived in Gray's Inn an estimable rich young Jew who sported over his oak the name of Abulay, with Wilfrid Isaacs preceding it. He coquetted with law, only because, by the Abulay traditions, it would have been sinful to lack a vocation. The Abulays were a family with a genius for the ordinary ; that had polished and perfected it to the pitch of art. Probably never before had the ordinary been made so attractive. An Abulay was invariably amiable, of large means, refined, optimistic, with an unimpeachable sense of the right thing, and with a gift of happy obscurity. An Abulay knew exactly where to tread : wise men on the steepes follow those paths which have been trodden hard by the generations of donkeys. Wilfrid Isaacs was, by all the omens, a typical Abulay.

His first perception that there was some element of errantry in him came as a surprise to Wilfrid. For some years he had

frequented in friendship a pleasant household that looked out on Kensington Gardens from the north side, and that comprised a stately valetudinarian mother and two buoyant daughters : a household to appeal to an Abulay : wherein all was spaciousness and ease and shining superfluity. Rhoda, the elder daughter, was the good and domestic one. She wore her ancient chatelaine with pride, and from the wave of her hand arose all the far-famed amenities of the household. She was of imperial build, handsome of feature, gentle and loving of expression. She was serious, even solemn, with a deep sense of the many things that were sacred to her. Wilfrid approved of her immensely.

Judith, the younger, was nineteen and slender : nymph even as her sister was queen. Judith was the brilliant one, intolerant of housekeeping, restless, eager, many-sided, imaginative. Wilfrid disapproved of her immensely.

Yet it was not Rhoda, but Judith, whom Wilfrid asked one day to marry him. And nobody more amazed than he !

Judith accepted him, wore his ring, but postponed matrimony *sine die*. That she was a bewilderment he had always known ; but that she might refuse to tread the familiar paths in the familiar way, had not really occurred to him. In their new relation, she eluded him as much as ever before—eluded his understanding and the reach of his hand. Things did not at all take the satisfactory shape that had been his inborn conception of the betrothed pair's progress. Wilfrid, in fact, was rather out of it. Judith occasionally threw the poor dog a look of graciousness, or gently put her finger tips on his arm, when he was thrilled for a fortnight to come. But, *per contra*, she sometimes laughed at him—not before people, of course. And then her accomplishments ! With their eternally flashing this way and that, they dazzled his eyes to blinking. Sometimes, indeed, they stirred him uneasily : as when she studied up her costume-dances—all sorts of Greek and French things and weird choreographies of the moment ; posturing exquisitely in the drawing room in tinsel and spangles, to spectators as dubious as himself. Once or twice was well enough he would murmur—to himself, not to her !—with a gesture magnanimously permissive. But, really, these constant performances ! It was going too far : it was—well, stooping somewhat ! The disapproval would seethe in him for weeks : till on some rare day a swift touch of her lips against his would clarify his soul like magic.

And then, suddenly, the drift and meaning of it all came to him: though he fought against the understanding. Impossible! Judith could never wish to be an actress! The theatricals she had organised for a charity? That had been a reputable affair, with a resounding chunk of money for widow and orphan. The acknowledged brilliance of her performance was in a way to be deplored, of course; all this unmeasured applause and immoderate complimenting might have touched her vanity to issues dangerous!

It was soon visible that this was, indeed, a case of the lioness and blood tasted: of the rousing of appetite insatiable. There was now a perpetual poring over acting editions. There were mutterings and declaimings, standings and stridings, bowings and stiffenings, cinematographic metamorphoses—faces solemn, tragic, mocking, laughing. Wilfrid, perturbed to his innermost marrow, could only wait and watch the issue of his fears: watch Judith make steadily, with compass true set, for the universe of the theatre; though her route thither was of the most distinguished. She joined all sorts of societies for readings and performances—Shakespeare and Greek tragedy, if you please—under high academic auspices: with horrid tea and coffee and discreetly-pitched conversation afterwards. Even for Wilfrid, the histrionic here took on a dignity, and he would not have been without a certain pride in these coquettings of hers with the art, could he have been sure they were to end in those amiable regions. It was only when she spoke yearningly one day of the professional stage that he was moved to remonstrance. The professional stage?—when she had thousands a year a-gathering against her majority! Alas, the remonstrance only illumined her to herself: gave her a sure sight of her own resolutions—clinched the resolution at once! Judith flung out her definite announcement—her inflexible decision. She was going on the stage professionally!

## II

They had done nothing so vulgar as quarrel. At the most anxious moment when he had asked if their engagement meant nothing to her; if, in view of her going on the stage, she had rather it were forgotten, she had merely said: "You silly! That's all the more reason for going on with it. It's awfully jolly to be engaged you know, especially when you're on the stage! And I'm

so very young yet ! ” He had no heart to fight her, no weapons in his armoury to fight with. He accepted the new situation—astounded at the acceptance, which in advance had seemed incredible. And so the engagement continued.

But it was soon forced on Wilfrid that Judith was now remoter from him than in all prior experience. For—effectively—on the stage she was ! Into amateur societies and around the special stages of intellectual cachet he had been able to follow her : from the real theatre he was inexorably shut off. He did not like stage-doors. He felt vaguely degraded hanging about them. The ghosts of he knew not what—of things poignant and unseizable—haunted these dingy lobbies in sordid side alleys. Sometimes, he fancied he detected sarcasm on the faces or in the words and voices of stage-door keepers, and that annoyed him. Judith began to live in her own whirl, wide and far-reaching ; for her power of penetration was marvellous, and nothing was alien to her that savoured of the footlights.

Yet, if Wilfrid could not follow her in these new horizons ; in a manner she brought them to him. From the universe of the theatre, from its heights and from its depths, even from the purlieus of its outermost regions, Judith recruited a swarm of friends and acquaintances that poured into the house through the door she had flung wide-open. And Rhoda received them all solemnly and sweetly, saw to it that they might warm themselves well in that plenteous atmosphere. Wilfrid Isaacs Abulay stood among them all—a lost soul : full of disdain at obvious Bohemianism, shocked by the clouds of smoke and slang that blew from the lips of sylphs and Venuses. When he told Judith that some of her women seemed hardly good style, she laughed, assured him they were dears—called him a dear ! Again, he smothered down his revolt and accepted the new situation.

As the months went by, still newer phases were destined to add to his distresses. Judith did not even appear to be holding to her own personal standards. Was she changing profoundly ? Her triple armour of pride—had she thrown it off ? The atmosphere of *sans-gêne* had penetrated. She had become impossibly “unconventional.” Her life seemed chockfull of platonic friendships—toadstool growths, not even mushroom ! She gadded about blithely with all sorts of men, some of them so palpably “rotten” that it was nigh unendurable to think of them. She

visited them alone at their chambers or lodgings, and then not always at tea-time ! Now Hamlet or Falstaff, now Dick Phenyl or Disraeli, took her to restaurants or escorted her to performances and drove her home afterwards. And not a soul to keep an eye on her ! With his own eye at a distance, Wilfrid yet saw it all clear. Good heavens ! Was there no code a woman might be proud to hold to—nay, to value her holding to it more than all the rest of life ? Where was the stately reserve, the high disdain, to keep off the familiarity of this brute mob ?—beast of many heads he would gladly have slaughtered at a swoop !

Yet Judith wore his ring ; would even flash its gems before him sometimes. She held him captive. He knew that *he* could never withdraw from their engagement : that very thought made the whole of space seem one vast horrible blackness. So once again he accepted everything—broke himself in to the acceptance of all her " stooping," mangling limb and bone in the process.

And the engagement continued.

### III

Judith's stage career took at length a trend of definiteness. Her " under-study " period in London was relatively brief, and led to its natural sequence of work in the provinces. Counting her own income in thousands, she of course never lacked an engagement. Touring companies liked to have her with them—this brilliant Jewess, with her exotic beauty. Did she not give her earnings several times over to the various " Funds " ? Was she not notoriously generous to the struggling ? Free-handed with her loans that were as good as statute-barred from the first minute ? Did not her luxurious residence in hotels give a cachet, an added sense of status, to the humblest fellow-worker in her immediate orbit ?

To Wilfrid, at any rate, her provincial progress was certainly no darker than her unchaperoned career in London. He was biding his time : hoping, believing, that the flame would blaze itself out ; that his hour would strike—a little sooner, a little later—he must be patient. But, even then, he was already aware that a new name had crept into the situation. The name of Nicholls, indeed, grew from something quite casual—unnoticed almost—to something quite portentous. An intervening stage of incredulity, of beating

down some prevision that sought hard to obtrude itself, and Nicholls was an all-too solid fact—established, undeniable! With Nicholls, Judith had definitely, flaringly, associated herself: the actor, Nicholls—the genius whom the common need of money had kept under, whose voice floated like a soft wind of summer, or soared to the beauty of an organ note; the genius who was acknowledged, but whose career was tragically frustrated by a ridiculous superstition that he carried “ill-luck”—inevitably brought disaster!—whenever he trod the boards in London.

It was as though she had found at last her supreme artistic deity, and all the enthusiasm, all the energy of her, turned to the worship of him. Herald of his name and fame to the last breath of her, athrob with service, she guarded and smoothed and cherished. She, at any rate, meant to break down that tragic superstition which had so pitilessly all but proved fatal to him—had wasted him on minor tours that had barely brought him bread.

The notoriety of it spread everywhere. In torture, Wilfrid wondered and waited. What was the nature of the bond between her and this man—this self-consecration—this strange passion of devotion? Better perhaps to have killed her and killed himself at the beginning, than to have allowed her to set her course on those treacherous seas! It was to Rhoda he staggered at last with the burden of poisoned fruit, of which his whole soul was a garden luxuriant. And Rhoda soothed him with gentle words: with her staunch loyalty to Judith, who, after all, had not sent him back his ring; with that whole atmosphere of ordered serenity around her, to which Judith really belonged and, in the depths of her, would never be faithless; while the valetudinarian mother moved in and out like a shadow of dignity, passing to her carriage amid the obeisance of butler and footman, to mysterious satisfactions of her own questing.

Wilfrid, worn out by the struggle, at last accepted even Nicholls. And the engagement continued.

#### IV

One day Wilfrid was moved by a masterful inspiration. He left London by an early train, and went straight to Judith. He must press her to marry him at once.

She seemed full of delight to see him; but when she called him

"old boy" and "dear old boy," it gave him an odd little shiver. He hated the current coin of Bohemia, however it might ring of the true metal. Nor was he fortunate in his hour; for it was Saturday—matinée day—and she must hurry.

"But come along and see the play, old boy, fetch me back after, I'll give you tea, and we'll have the loveliest chat." She added that it was a fine play—three acts—very modern—she was sure he'd enjoy it! Nicholls had given her the star part, and "I am very good in it, you know."

The theatre was only a few steps from her hotel, so Wilfrid soon had his seat in the stalls, amid the barest sprinkling of audience, that refused—steadfastly—to grow any denser ere the curtain rose. For a time, the play tranquillised him. It was bland, sweet, idyllic! It handled him masterfully: wormed itself into his confidence. Then, abruptly, in the second act, it took him by the throat and shook him; and, before he could assemble his wits, the act had stormed into a final scene of daring passion. Nicholls held Judith in his arms hideously: she lay limp: the lips of the twain met in a contact that was absolute. Wilfrid lowered his eyes. When he looked up at the stage again, their lips were yet in contact, but the curtain was descending. Could he sit it out? But neither could he move.

The curtain rose for the third act—a bedroom in intimate detail. And Judith was there, as in the sanctity of her own privacy, in a flimsy pink wrap that was agape in front, where gleamed the lace-work and frills of lingerie; her hair spread over her shoulders, as he had never seen it. Nicholls entered. Judith stood facing him a-quiver. He defied her to show the strength to send him away.

At that moment, the spell that held Wilfrid was broken. He had seen enough. He rose abruptly and staggered out of the theatre.

In the air, he paced about waiting for her. And, as he paced, all that he had accepted, all that he had gulped down from the beginning, he vomited again: all that he had ever surrendered, he laid violent hold of. He raged against the whole damned infected past of the business; against her bespangled dancing in the drawing-room, against her early theatricals, against the unconventionalities and friendships of that whole impossible existence!

Yet, when she appeared at last, smiling, it was at once clear to him that her unconsciousness of any soiling was absolute.

"Well?" she asked. "Wasn't I splendid?"

His silence answered her and abruptly she looked at him—saw the yawning of the hopeless chasm between them. Her smile died: the trouble in her eyes matched his.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" she said.

"I'm sorry, too!" he exclaimed. "Much more sorry than you!"

"Ah! ■ only you had a little sympathy with my artistic aspirations!"

"Artistic aspirations!" he echoed, and broke into laughter so ironic, so savagely mocking, that she could not but perceive the full bitterness that possessed him. She stood dumb by his side. "I have waited three years. Are my aspirations nothing? Are you never to give this up?"

She answered him humbly. She was only twenty-two, was making a name and beginning to carry "authority." She had felt the genuine call: acting was to her a vocation. Besides, she was now tied up by a five years' contract to Nicholls!

"A five years' contract!" he echoed. "Shameful!"

"Ah, you hate the stage!"

"Yes," he returned hotly, "when the woman who means everything to me has to exhibit herself, before—before all eyes!"

She looked at him gravely. "Poor old boy, I really believe you don't understand."

"I don't—thank heaven!" he said tersely.

"That's the work—that's the nature of the art!"

"That's the nature of filth!" he threw out.

"No, no, you don't understand!" The tears were now openly in her eyes, and her sob could not be stifled down. "I think only of the work. It is all pure art!"

"It ■ filth—it ■ dishonour!"

"Oh, no!" she said again.

They had reached the door of her hotel.

"Good-bye, Wil," she said, extending her hand.

"Good-bye!" he said. It seemed natural just then for him to leave her, and he turned away as she was passing out of his sight.

## V

"There seems nothing more to be said. I'm sorry!" Such was the brief note she sent to him, and with it his ring, his presents, and every letter she had kept of his.

The engagement at last was ended. Like a sensible man, he should have raised his head ere long—as his friends were of opinion—and looked around for a wife, somebody rational who would not burn his fingers again. That the beach was full of other pebbles, was more than once whispered in his ear. Others, varying the metaphor, reminded him that the sea had still good fish in it. But a year or two passed, and Wilfrid maintained his rôle of recluse. Judith's old household knew him no longer; Rhoda understood and respected his remoteness.

There followed for Wilfrid years of a strange mood which would not burn itself out. The engagement was, indeed, no more; the silence of the eternities flowed between him and Judith; but he had long known that his great flaming of rebellion had been only momentary. He had by now long swallowed Judith's "art" to the dregs—to its embracings and the laying of mouth on mouth; had gulped down its flimsiest pink wraps and frilliest lingerie. He had surrendered, as he had surrendered during this whole strange adventuring of his into the realm of sentiment. He knew she still possessed his spirit. The bond that held him to her seemed indissoluble, as though sacramental and in the very scheme of creation. Never might he cut loose from it: never wished he to cut loose from it. And so, during those years of her self-bondage to Nicholls he continued to follow her whereabouts, searching for her name in the stage papers, and falling on any word or tidings of her as one perishing of hunger. But futile to seek her out again! As between him and Nicholls, she had chosen. He knew her soul was with Nicholls.

There came a morning when the world read the news that Nicholls had at last taken a theatre in London. It whizzed in Wilfrid's head at once that Judith was now twenty-five and had come into absolute control of her fortune. "The child will ruin herself for him!" The words escaped him, as he held the calm sure prevision of the event.

Eighteen months of pyrotechnics and flaming—the sure making for disaster of genius without capacity—and Judith's hundred thousand pounds had fired themselves out, and only the bits of blackened casing to clear away after the carnival! Nicholls went off to the Colonies. Judith was penniless.

It was after the collapse that Wilfrid went to see Rhoda again for the first time. Judith, he learnt, had taken a high hand with her

family. She would have neither reproaches nor generosity. The slender uncertain earnings of a touring actress would suffice her. And, with Judith, he knew, it would be an absolute facing of consequences till the last gasp.

"Perhaps she will think of me, perhaps send *me* a word." So ran his wistful thought, as he turned from the house. "A word would be precious," he added aloud. But his heart held no hope. As for his going to her, that seemed, were greater degree possible, more hopeless still.

And time took on its terrible course, with its ashen days, and that sense of the immeasurable ocean of silence. He still followed her movements : she seemed fairly prosperous for a year or so, then apparently her vogue declined, and she had passed in the end out of the eye of the world. She had been pushed into obscurity—as he reasoned it out—by the press of new aspirants.

There were big gaps now in her record—ominous ! Stretches of idleness ? Great God ! Was she undergoing privations ? It maddened him—maddened him ! The nights brought not rest but an arid duration. There came at last a terrible gap that stretched on for months and months.

Her figure was persistently before his eyes : thin, worn, disillusioned, suffering, regretful. Yet eternally ever so nymph-like ! The vision that had finally crystallised, that lived with him—in his brain and blood—was of the eager child with sparkling eyes who had danced in the old spacious drawing-room. But with all the old bravura out of her now ! Throughout the months and the years his mind ran ever on her life : he was convinced that he had learnt to understand her and could interpret everything. The world of her girlhood had been all prosperous commonplace—had cloyed : the world into which she had plunged had movement, riot colour ! She had been fascinated passionately, as a child by a carnival ! Yes, that was it. She had been just a child : it was the carnival spirit that had seized hold of her, and she had made straight for the dazzle and roar of it all.

In her, not an atom of sordidness. Eager and generous, she had staked all for a genius in whom she believed. That was ever so fine of her ! He could appreciate her. She was a treasure of the rarest worth ! Perhaps, indeed, if he had had the sense to stand by her, she might yet have been influenced and held back from that noble recklessness ! But he had hurt her deeply by his want of

belief in her—in her real self—and so they had parted, as she thought, for ever !

Yet life since then had taught much to both of them. Where all the dazzle and roar had been, where all the fun had gone in full swing, there could be now only a bit of muddy ground for her. Poor child ! ■ be so abandoned there in full disillusion—wary, dispirited and sad perhaps to death ! If only he might fetch the child home again—if only he might fetch the child home !

The gap of idleness for her seemed to stretch on endlessly. How futile this thought of fetching her home—her whereabouts were shrouded in full darkness ! Then, to his joy, one day, he came upon her name again and held her throughout a few weeks' tour, keeping his eye fixed on the end of it, as that loomed nearer and nearer.

The Saturday came at last, which, as he had ascertained, was to see its winding-up at a minor house at Edinburgh. That morning he awoke, conscious that, by some odd chance, it was the seventh anniversary of their parting. And, on that very day, curiously, he was going to lose trail of her again.

Well, it was a bold initiative he had acted on—those years ago. Repeat it ? Surely this time she would realise his motives better : must see clear what his unwavering devotion was worth to her ! Was there a train soon ? Could he get right up to the North there in time ? Yes—a journey of some ten hours and he might just intercept her ! Yes—he would go ! To fetch the child home again—to fetch the child home again !

And at once he was off. Unreal miles flew past him : the clangour of unreal stations, the gruffness of unreal voices, marked the stages. There was gathered in him a mighty flood of explanation, regrets, pleading and avowal of eternal love. She would be touched to the depths : would be gathered into his arms in a communion more exquisite than man and woman could have realised since creation.

He was on his way—on his way—to fetch the child home again !

## VI

At the theatre, ■ was just too late. But he was in time to cajole the address from the door-keeper, and drove there at once.

The landlady smiled on him approvingly—why, he knew not and

was a little surprised. He had been surprised a little, too, that both street and house should prove so commodious, and a large, comfortable sitting-room now appeared, as an inner door was thrown open. A slightly smelling globular lamp stood on the long table, over half of which shone a white damask cloth with bowls of flowers, a joint of sirloin, and covers laid for two—though the last detail reached him but vaguely. He was aware that the door of the sitting-room had closed again behind him, that he was alone with a pleasant-faced young woman, plump and rather motherly—a complete stranger to him—who had risen and stood there in the lamp-light. As she stared at him astonished, he felt his blood burning everywhere.

His nymph had eluded him again—vanished quite with a swish of her elfin skirts and spangles! This was a full-blossoming young woman, richly dressed in a semi-evening gown, and the sheen of its silver glimmered through some gossamer-like lace thrown across her shoulders. He noticed they were of a striking breadth, those shoulders, and that there were marked well-filled folds of flesh where the full jaw merged into the neck.

And then his brain seemed to cast off some trick of exaggeration and distortion which his surprised and weary eyes had played on him, and he discerned in the pleasant features of that broadened face sufficient that remained of the Judith of old to shine out at him in ghost-like assurance that it was she.

As Wilfrid stood there, he knew in that moment that he did not love the woman before him; knew this was a type of woman's incarnation which—as physical ideal—he hated! And his hatred of it seemed to multiply itself and multiply itself. He stood with an almost intolerable weight at his heart. And then it flashed upon him, too, that this was the woman who had brought about the supreme frustration of his life: this was she whose obstinacy and self-assertion had rejected all influence—to whom the promptings of self-will had been the one unswerving law of her being.

To have come with that wonderful love of ten whole years and that emotional flood in him, and to find himself face to face with sheer hatred—and self-loathing too—gave him the sense of a tearing grinding rasp with which his every nerve through and through shuddered and trembled. For seven of those years he had continued to love, cherish, idealise and justify the eager generous child of the old far-off days, the Judith who had just vanished, but

who now for an instant insisted on flashing back uncannily again, with the full swirl of her spangled ballet-skirts, in his very eyes. So that child—of whom he had dreamt night and day, whom he had sallied forth so yearningly to fetch home again—had long had no existence! Years of his life seemed suddenly reduced to shadow and mockery.

But he knew at once that the same impetus which had brought him here must take him forward! There could be no going back on it. The tale he had come to unfold must be unfolded. What power was there in him to check it now? Even had he the power, the iron assurance, to ladle out the acid truth, how deal such deadly insult to her? However he might detest himself now, he knew it was never in him to be as odious as that. She must already know—in a flash at the sight of him—all that had brought him here. It was not she who had called him. It was he who had thrust himself upon her. Well, he was not going to ride rough-shod over her with this complex, crushing, loathsome, impossible truth! He was going to lie—and to lie through the whole business. He had come to lay bare his soul. Well, that flood, rising from the sources that were finest in him must out—to be astonishingly transformed to falsehood! He saw himself living out life to the end with Judith—as one big lie!

An intense misery invaded and ravaged him, accompanying this firm perception of the rôle he was now set on enacting. Judith was the first to break that intense moment of silence. She laughed—just an odd little laugh of wonder as he dawned on her—and her eyes took on an unmistakable sparkle of delight as she scanned the features so familiar to her of old.

"This is nice of you, Wil! I am ever so glad to see you again!"

She gave him both her hands quite impulsively, pressed his with the frankest affection. But he felt at once that even her voice had echoes that were disagreeably novel to him. It was fuller, deeper, more emphatic than it had been. It had the swing of a good-natured, easy-going, wide-spread familiarity for everybody. Even as he flinched here, too, at the change, the warmth of her welcome had for him the finality of Fate.

"You're very much surprised, naturally?" he ventured.

"Well, I suppose I am," she laughed. She still held his hands and stroked and caressed them.

"Only just managed to bundle in at Euston—train already on the move! May I sit?"

"What am I thinking about?" she exclaimed. "Do try this one!" She led him to the biggest armchair and installed him there with much piling up of cushions.

"Thanks, Judith!" He sank into the chair, aware that all his forces were exhausted. "We made very good time—barely three minutes out, on a ten hours' run. That's quite good, you know."

"Very! Though I hadn't any idea you'd have business in Edinburgh."

"Oh, I'm not here on business!" he declared.

"What!—a long journey like that just to pay a little after-theatre call on an old pal—eh, Wil?"

Of course she knew why he had come: that showed it. She was clearly being charming to him, and affording him just the opening. Well, let him go through with it.

"That's it!" he said. "I wanted to see my old pal again!"

"That's real nice of you." She eyed him ever so affectionately again. "Still—ten hours you know. Poor boy, you look tired out."

"Oh, I'd have gone half-round the world," he assured her. "One can't go further than half-round on this globe, can one?"

She pondered a moment. "That sounds cryptic."

"Well, a bachelor can go where he likes, can't he?—to see an old pal—if he cares for the old pal well enough."

"So you're still a bachelor?" she smiled.

With what a direct thrust did she drive straight at the point. "Fortunately, yes," he said.

"Fortunately? That sounds rather cynical! You don't believe in marriage then?"

"I do!"

"I don't see it," she said.

How she was handling him—positively forcing him to the directest and clearest utterance.

"Well, if a bachelor—fortunate in being a bachelor——" He stopped, struggling to get his declaration straight.

"Go on, Wil," she smiled encouragingly. "You've no need to be shy with *me*! Let's have it!"

"Well, if a bachelor takes a ten hours' journey at a moment's

notice to see an old pal, then it's evident he has something of great moment to say to her."

"To say to me! Dear old Wil, you know I was ever so fond of you, and I'd do anything in the world for you!" She spoke very earnestly, and the affection that beamed at him from her eyes seemed to deepen to a vibrating tenderness, "What is it, dear old boy? You must tell your old pal, Judith, everything."

"Well," he began; "I want to take your mind back to the time of our engagement."

Her eyes opened wide. "Were we engaged—you and I?" Then she laughed. "Why, so we were!"

He gasped. What an adept she was at playing with him—like a cat with a mouse.

"Oh, but that was a long time ago," she reminded him.

"Seven years," he cried. "Seven years to-day. It's the anniversary of our parting."

"Really!" she exclaimed. "And you remembered that!" Her eyes were shining at him now with a tenderness which he felt to be positively melting.

"I have never forgotten!"

"I see!" she exclaimed. "You're in love and want to get married. Now do confess—you dear old thing! Out with it!"

"Yes, I am in love!"

"And you don't want her ever to hear that you've been engaged before! What a romantic you are! Don't let that trouble you at all!"

How like the actress to introduce a little bit of ridiculous make-believe like that. She knew well enough what he meant, but she must make him say it implicitly.

"But it's you, Judith, I'm in love with and want to marry!" He rose with the impetus of it and took a step or two towards her. He was glad that at last it was out—and point blank!

"Me?"

Her start, her out-and-out astonishment, were extraordinarily well feigned, he thought. Actress she certainly was!

"Not one day of those seven years but I've cherished the thought of you! I have, Judith—I have!"

"But——" she began.

"Listen!" He cut her short; he could not check his words

The thoughts that had so long become finalities in his mind

were smoothly on his lips again. "Seven years are a long time, but we have both learnt our lesson from life. As one sits amid the ashes, one has time to think, and one sees more clearly."

"Ashes?" She appeared puzzled. "What ashes do you mean?"

"The ashes of fair scenes and outlooks that have been destroyed; amid which one sits in disillusion and regret. On my side, I have long bitterly regretted that discussion—that foolish discussion forced on me which led to our breaking."

"You're still in love with me and want to marry me," she breathed, her face full of wonder.

He nodded. A faint "Yes" came from his lips.

"But——" she began again.

Masterfully, he thrust her objection aside. "I ask you to remember," he broke in, "that, with me, from the beginning, it was a sacrament!"

"I can't marry you!" she gasped. "I've a husband already!" He looked, and saw the ring on her finger that he might have seen at any moment. What a fatuous ass he had been! He was curiously aware of his own pallor, as he hung his head in miserable silence.

"Well! You *are* a romantic! Still in love with me! You dear old Wil, you must get over that!"

He still could not find his voice. His humiliation at the moment seemed almost to involve a dissolution of the earth beneath him.

"Why, I've been married nearly three years," she went on. "I've a little boy—a lovely little boy!"

"So you're married!" he breathed at last. "I am trying to realise it," he explained.

"My husband's a wine merchant in Bristol. I'll give you his card in a moment. We get on very well together—very well, indeed—Bobbie and I. Why, he's so happy that he's going to become a Jew. Not orthodox of course, but he's signing on with the Montefiore crowd."

"Oh, really?" he ejaculated.

"I thought it was he when you rang, only it was a bit earlier than I expected. Won't you stay to supper and meet him?"

"It's awfully good of you," murmured Wilfrid; "but I really hardly feel up to it."

" Oh, I'm sorry, but of course I mustn't press you. I do want to press you—awfully ! "

" Thank you for understanding," he said.

" Poor old Wil ! I really am so sorry ! "

" Well, at any rate it's a consolation you aren't down on your luck," smiled Wilfrid. " You see I was always trying to follow what shops you had."

" Oh, I practically gave up the stage when I married. My husband didn't like it. The dear man didn't like to see me on the stage in other men's arms, and I didn't like to worry him. There were an engagement or two I had to keep, and this tour is an old promise, but now I want to get back to my little boy. He's the best twopennyworth I ever had ! "

Wilfrid felt it was the moment for him to go. " What made you ever accept *me* ? " he was impelled to throw out.

" Oh, that ! Wasn't that always the purest make-believe ? You were always such a perfect big brother—steady as a rock—good for my nerves. Besides, being on the stage and engaged was rather jolly, you know."

" I see," he said. " Well, good-bye for the present ! "

Again, she took both his hands. " I say ! " she exclaimed.

" Didn't I make an awful ass of myself over that Nicholls ? "

" Oh," he assured her, " that was pure idealism ! "

" Idealism be hanged ! " she said. " I was a horrid little fool, and I jolly well wouldn't do it again for anybody ! "

She led him into the hall.

" I'm awfully sorry, dear old boy, about this whole business. Now you *will* promise me you'll soon get over it—won't you ? "

" I'll try," he murmured.

" You won't do anything rash ? " she exclaimed suddenly.

" Promise me you won't do anything rash ! "

" Rash ? "

" You won't commit suicide ? You're such a romantic, you know. Promise me, promise me ! You won't do anything desperate ? "

" No, I won't do anything desperate," he assured her, anxious to be gone, ere the husband should come barging into him.

" It wouldn't even be an advertisement for me, now that I'm off the stage ! "

" I see that," he laughed.

"And I do really want you for a nice big brother—I really do ! You look worn out, poor Wil. Cheer up—give your sister a nice kiss 'good-bye'."

He kissed her obediently on the lips. It was a clammy horrid contact, he thought.

"When you're in Bristol, don't forget there's the warmest welcome waiting. You *will* look us up, won't you ? Wait a bit—my husband's card !"

She flashed away, then was speedily back with the card which he placed in his wallet. She opened the front door for him.

"*Au revoir*, Wil, and all good wishes. I suppose I'll have to make it up with my family soon—give my love to Mum and Rhoda, if you see them !"

"I will," he said and passed out of the house and down the front steps.

"Ta-ta !" she cried and waved, as he flourished his hat at her again.

Then the door closed on her exuberant personality as he moved away. He took out a handkerchief and rubbed away the sense and remembrance of the kiss.

## VII

He had left his little bag at the station, and decided he would take the sleeper back to London. What had he to do for a single night in Edinburgh ? Of food he had had none since the morning, but he could still touch none. He was all burnt up now : a cool long drink would be welcome. But was the hour legitimate still for drinks ? He looked at his watch : it was twenty to eleven. Could he find a taxi to the station ?

At that very moment, a taxi turned into the deserted street and shot towards him. Then, as it passed, slackening, he held the certainty that this would be Judith's husband. A desire to have a glimpse of the man—as well as to pick up the taxi—made him retrace his few steps. The taxi had stopped at the house, and Wilfrid was able to obtain a good view of the fare as he settled with the cabman. A rather short and jolly-looking man of about forty in straw boater and light tweeds, with a big boyish head and chubby roseate cheeks ! You might expect him at any moment to start whistling the latest music-hall ditty. So this was the dear man

who was so happy that he was becoming a Jew—who hadn't liked to see Judith on the stage in other men's arms, and so she had given ■ all up like a lamb ! Well, well !

He hailed the taxi and consulted the driver. There was ample time to catch the sleeper, and, as for refreshment, why, he could be served up till eleven and he could set him down not very far from the station at a very good tavern where they served you a rare fine brew and the long pull into the bargain.

Wilfrid got into the taxi and nestled reposefully in the place which Judith's husband had vacated. Life after all, didn't seem so bad. There was a calm in the very air : the world through which he was moving seemed soft and friendly in the shadows of the summer night. Ere long, he found himself set down amid brilliant and busier streets, and handed his driver a sovereign. The man was dubious : thought he could hardly manage the change.

"Oh, I've had luck to-day," said Wilfrid, "so you may as well have a bit too !"

"Thank you, sir. I hope you'll enjoy your refreshment and have a comfortable journey to London."

As Wilfrid stood presently at the tavern bar, he had the novel consciousness of free and open mastery of his own soul. Stupendous this sane sensation of having been released from clogging loads and morbid fetters that had held him down for years as in some noisome pit ! But, from head to foot, within and without, he was as yet a cinder in which the glow of the day's conflagration still lingered—though the conflagration had passed away.

"A pint of bitter !" he ordered.

He watched the Botticelli hand of the barmaid take up a big glass that stood near ice. O fair generous measure, with so ample promise of moisture ! O delightful row of engines, shining with nickel splendour and coolness of snow-white handled ! O angel virgin—or ministering harlot—blessed be thy gentle self, whichever thou art, as thou drawest amber fluid all a-sparkle !

From the suggestion of that row of handles, a dewy fine spray seemed, in illusion, to be all around him. Out of that glittering tap, as he watched intently, the liquid foamed its way, rising slowly in the huge receptacle . . . to the brim. With restrained civilised hand he received it : conveyed it calmly, steadily, towards him, yet with an immense sense of preciousness.

How cold the glass to the touch ! Slowly, too, he raised it.

## PRELUDE TO A PINT OF BITTER



The foam met his lips. Preciously, the amber was received against his palate. The perfume of it fizzled in his nostrils—crystal, exquisite ! 'Twas indeed, as his friend the cabman had assured him, a rare fine brew !

The amber gurgled deliciously, not only against the dryness of his palate and throat, but caressed its way deep into the whole parched fibre of him ; searching out every recess and cranny both of spirit and substance, and gently inciting into action the secret processes of the creative *elan*. It infiltrated every ultimate particle, animated every weary nerve, sparkled through every cell and fibre of his brain, and quivered cool in every far capillary. As under an all-permeating kiss, every atom of him quickened and thrilled to the rapture.

Life lay fresh before him. At last he stood a man—self-respecting, confident—in a universe that was new again as a spring meadow.

Ten years had gone since he had first realised himself as possessed by that all-absorbing love for Judith : ten years of doubts, fears, disapprovals, anxieties, frustrations, distresses and agonies. Not one throb of life in those tormented years but had been pervaded, coloured and vibrated by that love ! Truly, he reflected, all those years of emotion and anguished stress had been destined, in the march of things, to be but the prelude to this most glorious pint of bitter. As against the myriads of minutes of those ten years of loving, this last now seemed the supremest minute of all.

## THE MIRACULOUS KADDISH

By SAMUEL GORDON

Samuel Gordon, born in Germany, 1871, died in London, 1928. Educated at City of London School and Cambridge University. Was secretary of the Great Synagogue, London. Published several novels, notably "Sons of the Covenant" and "Strangers at the Gate," and volumes of short stories. Brother of Mrs. Gertrude Landa. "The Miraculous Kaddish" ■ reprinted by permission of the "Jewish Forum," New York.

FOR two hours old Rachel had been waiting at the corner of the street, if street it could be called, for her Zallel. At last he came. She ran, that is, she hobbled up to him, with cries of relief and many anxious inquiries.

Alas, the pack he brought back was nearly as heavy as the one he had taken away with him on Monday morning. For this day was Friday and Rosh Hashannah this year fell on a Sabbath—oh, blessed combination! So he had had a whole week as usual, to do his huckstering and the pack came back nearly as heavy as it went.

"Why I am late?" Zallel replied, answering like the true Yid he was, one question by another, or at least, echoing it. Then he paused, running his fingers through his long scraggy beard.

We may here take the opportunity to observe that his real name was B'Zallel, but that time and use had worn away the initial labial and the apostrophe. He continued:

"I've already been to the bath and the felsher has attended to my leg."

"Your leg? Woe is me; yes, you are limping."

"A peasant set his dog on me, a fierce dog."

"Oh, the wicked ones! May they grill in Gehennom!"

"Nu, what's the matter? Let this also be for good. I live and the dog lives, so it's all right. Why should not a Christian dog also for once have a taste of kosher meat?"

And there was a cunning twinkle in his rheumy eye. Rachel sighed.

"You haven't sold much, I can see," she said.

"Several balls of wool, three packets of pins, two combs. What of it? In return at least I still have nearly all my stock. Stock is capital, capital means money. So, at any rate, we are no poorer than we were when I went away."

They walked on towards their home in silence, she trying to alleviate the pressure of his pack and only incommoding him by her clumsy help. But he did not chide her. The man has yet to be born who could testify to a cross word between Zallel and Rachel. It was Zallel who spoke next.

"No, Rachel, my crown, we shall never do it."

She made no reply, although she knew full well to what he referred. She gave him a sly sideways glance and her thin lips were set more tightly; over her wizened face flashed a look which blended joy, gratitude and mystery. ■ Zallel's sight had been keener he would have seen that Rachel had a secret. Instead he merely went on voicing his whimsically gloomy thoughts.

"Ten copecks is all we shall be able to put to it this week. However, that's no less than any other week. We have already saved ten roubles. Well, anyway, that's a start towards the two hundred."

He rather wondered that Rachel did not break out into wailings. Ah, to be sure, she had yammered so much in her life and even the deepest well will run dry. What is a man a man for if he has not the strength to complain? He continued in a soliloquising strain:

"I can't blame them for asking so much. The congregation is poor. ■ I were Gabbai and would come to myself and say: 'Dear Reb Zallel, make it cheaper,' I would answer myself: 'Dear Reb Zallel, impossible! We are in great need. The karopka is going begging, because no one will take it since the last two men who farmed it were ruined. The shochet gets paid one week in three, the Rav not at all. Let us hope the prophet Elijah feeds him. Two of our S'phorim are in rags and we can't get them mended. The woman's bath has a deep hole in the floor and Yenta, the shoemaker's, was nearly drowned last week. Need I tell you more?' 'Yes, but there are two of us,' I would say. 'There is no reduction on quantity,' I would answer. 'Every person has a soul ■ be prayed for and one is worth as much as the other. Look, for a paltry hundred roubles each you and your wife will have Kaddish said for you every year all through eternity.'"

"Only a hundred roubles," echoed Zallel.

"Only a hundred roubles," echoed Rachel.

" 'I can't let you have it for less,' I would go on, '■ I did, Chayim and Shmerel would also ask to have it cheaper. After all a Kaddish ■ the greatest enjoyment in life one can have after it.' "

Zallel dragged on, trying to suppress his wheezy pantings of fatigue—why had Rachel come to meet him? One couldn't even indulge in the cheap luxury of panting. Rachel walked by his side, her face assuming a more and more mischievous smile as they approached the house. Suddenly Zallel began again, blinking rapidly:

"Rachel, if a man has only one son and that son dies, that man ought not to marry at all."

"The same applies to a woman," said Rachel, blinking more rapidly still.

"Now about this Kaddish," said Zallel, very matter-of-fact. "I think, Rachel, the best thing for us would be not to die at all. Then there will be no need to say Kaddish after us."

"What, never die? I wouldn't like that, I'm sure," said Rachel with a little shudder. "I feel so tired already. How much more tired will I feel in a thousand years?"

"Well, then die," Zallel cried resentfully, "but you will have no Kaddish. Unless there's a miracle."

"How do you know there will not be? God will provide," said Rachel with a pious, but withal, a wiseacre air.

"Ah, to be sure, He's a good provider. But He has so many people to provide for that we may have to wait a long while till He comes up to us."

"Hush, blasphemer! God provides for all at the same time. Perhaps He has provided for us already."

"If He has, He hasn't told me."

"He may tell you any minute."

"Well, then, don't chatter so much. If you do He won't have a chance of getting a word in."

It will be noted that Zallel was belying his reputation for forbearance to his wife. But that, perhaps, only proved that he loved her more than ever.

They entered their humble dwelling and Rachel took him straight to their humble kitchen, which he made his dressing-room, and where he snatched a few hasty mouthfuls.

"Have you bought the candle, and will it burn the twenty-four hours?"

To both these questions Rachel answered in the affirmative, and then, for a few moments, the two old people sat in deep silent thought.

It was the memorial candle for the son who had died, which was to be lit in accordance with the beautiful custom solemnising the anniversary of the beloved dead. What is it to symbolise? That the inscrutable will of God is not to be remembered with a sullen and rebellious mourning, but commemorated with a joyous resignation that illumines a grave as though it were an altar at a festival? Or is it that the soul of the departed is vouchsafed to dwell for a night and a day amid those it has left behind and shines among them with the glory of the light beyond?

It is meet to tell of the blow which smote the ancient hearts of Zallel and Rachel and drew down the blinds over their windows in the sky. Three years it was since they had received the fatal telegram announcing to them the death of their son, Mendel, their only child, given them rather late in life. He had died in America.

He had left them as a boy to seek his fortune in that far-off land, and indeed God had prospered him. Only in his last letter he had said that soon he would be coming to fetch them to pass their declining days in ease and dignity. And then Satan, the malicious one, jealous to see so much happiness fall to any mortal lot, had sent his henchman, the Angel of Death, to prevent it.

It appeared that Mendel had died on the first day of the year. The person who had sent them the sad, bad news, had omitted to inform them that he had been killed in a railway accident while he was travelling upon that sacred day to meet a business engagement. Why turn the iron in the wound of the stricken parents, by telling them that God had smitten him because he had committed that deadly sin? No, rather let them hug to themselves the thought that God had shown him special favour by calling him on one of the great and sacred days, a fate for which he was to be envied by even the most righteous ones on earth. And so they regarded him as a saint, from whose intercession everything might be expected, but whose repose was not to be troubled by the importunities of terrestrial prayers.

They would rather remain poor and without a Kaddish.

Zallel had finished dressing, and Rachel looked at him in

admiration as ■ stood there, resplendent in his silk kaftan and the straimel, the holiday headgear with the seven foxtails. Then Zallel said in a trembling voice :

" Rachel, it is time to light the candle."

Rachel led the way into the sitting room, her head bowed in sorrow, yes, but also because something else was written in her face which she did not want Zallel to read just yet.

Zallel stepped into the room, and there on the window-ledge stood the tall candle embedded in a flower-pot filled with soil. He looked at it and then rubbed his eyes. Yes, there stood the candle, but next to ■ stood another one. Speechless he turned up the palms of his hands in an interrogative gesture.

" Why, why ? " Rachel answered him impatiently. " Can't I burn a separate candle for my son if I want to ? "

Zallel shook his head, asking himself three questions : had the poor woman gone mad ? Was such extravagance justified for people in their station ? And the third and chiefest—was it permitted under the law to burn two candles, in the same house, for one and the same soul ? He had never heard of such a thing. ■ she insisted on it he would have to put the query before the Beth Din—and already his heart rejoiced at the prospect of holding speech with the members of that august body.

But meanwhile he was given cause for further perplexity. He turned to the table, spread with a gleaming white cloth, and on it stood not the usual two Sabbath lights, but four. They made a brave show, although the candelabra which held them was only four big potatoes hollowed out into a socket.

Then Zallel sat down and rocked himself forwards and backwards sorrowfully. Ah ! it was true—Rachel had gone out of her mind. Well, let that, too, be for good ! Now, at least, she would forget her afflictions.

Rachel watched him cunningly and creeping up to him, said softly :

" Since you must know everything, inquisitive one,—a poor woman has come with two children and she has begged to be allowed to stay over the holiday. She also has Yahrzeit to-day, and the other pair of candles——"

Zallel sprang up.

" Is it so ? Then praised be God that He has sent us guests. But—but——" he wrinkled his bushy brows—" where will the food come from ? "

"The food is here. She had just a little money left and with that I bought enough for all."

"Guests, guests!" exclaimed Zallel. "What a happy Yomtov we shall have!"

"Yes, Zallel, a very happy Yomtov—nearly as happy as if——" She broke off, wiping her eyes.

"Where are they now?"

"In the bedroom, taking a little rest. They were very tired from the travelling."

At that moment the door opened and in came a tall, handsome young woman, with a boy hanging on each arm. She came to a halt and, to his intense surprise, Zallel saw that her eyes were swimming in tears.

But that was not the only thing that surprised him about her. Neither she nor the boys looked as if they had been broken by a long journey. Consequently, they must have travelled in comfort. And otherwise, too, the woman did not look poor. She was dressed in a shimmering gown and the boys also wore—Zallel was a connoisseur in such things—suits of costly stuff.

"Do you come from Germany?" he asked, hardly knowing what he said.

"Not from Germany. Further than that. From America," replied the woman.

"But you speak our language."

"Everybody in America speaks your language."

"Tze, tze—marvellous!" said Zallel, making a clucking sound with his tongue.

He had risen to his feet. He was no fool, was Zallel. He saw that there was a great deal more behind this than met the ear. He glanced at Rachel, but she avoided his look.

"From America," he said haltingly. "Then perhaps you knew my son, Mendel."

For answer the young woman flung her arms around his neck, murmuring: "Father, father!" And then she turned apologetically to Rachel, who stood in a corner, sobbing and smiling and looking altogether like a summer shower with the sun shining high in the heavens. "Oh, mother, I can't keep the jest up any longer. Yes, father, I'm Mendel's wife and these are his sons. Walter, Percy, come!"

And presently Zallel felt his cold hands kissed by warm, young lips.

"Father," the young woman continued, "Mendel always said that when his eldest son was Bar Mitzvah, his father and mother should be present. And as it would be too troublesome for you to come across, we came here instead. He will be Bar Mitzvah on the first day of Succoth, and we thought it best to be here in good time."

"There you did right," said Zallel. He had sat down again, for his old legs would not carry him. The three came and crouched beside him.

"Now then, yungatches, now then, young rascals," Zallel said sternly, "do you know anything of the Holy Tongue?"

"I am studying Tractate Baba Kama," said the elder boy proudly.

"I've begun Rashi," said the younger.

"Talmud-sages! Then—come here, Rachel, and stand by me. Then will you say Kaddish for us when we die?"

"With pleasure, seideni," said the younger.

"Idiot!" said the elder, stamping on his foot.

At this there was a general laugh, such laughter as can only come from hearts welling over with glad tears.

"And now, Rachel, the candle."

So Rachel lit her candle and her daughter-in-law lit the other. For a few moments Zallel stood and looked into the bright flame. And on his face shone a light that could only have been reflected from the Shechinah itself.

Then, the big tears rolling down his cheeks, he took the two boys by the hand.

"Come, Kadeishim. It is time for Shool."

"Well, Zallel, what about the miracle?" asked Rachel triumphantly.

## DEATH

By S. L. BENSUSAN

Samuel Levy Bensusan, born 1872. His first book, "Morocco," was published in 1904. A well-known English author. At one time editor London "Jewish World." Brother-in-law of the famous painter Lucien Pissarro. Works include: "The Man in the Moon," 1906; "A Countryside Chronicle," 1907; "Wild Life Stories," 1907; "The Heart of the Wild," 1908; "Children's Story of the Bee," 1909; "Home Life in Spain," 1910; "Paris and London," 1911; "Father William," 1912; "Calgary," 1912; "The Renaissance and its Makers," 1913; "May Magic," 1913; "The Furriner" (3 act play), 1914; "Some German Spas," 1925; "Village Idylls," 1927; "Latter Day Rural England," 1928; "Comment From the Countryside," 1929; "April" (verse), 1929; "Dear Countryman," 1931; "Joan Winter," 1933.

ACACIA PLACE consists of two rows of small mid-Victorian houses huddled one against the other as though they were once in search of the social warmth they have never found. Now indeed they have even despaired of finding it; dinginess and old age have made them pathetically repellent, and Acacia Place has become a haunt of fast fading respectability. The blinds were down at No. 7 and across the dividing rails of the strip of front garden the guardian angels of No. 5 and No. 9 compared notes.

"So the pore fellow's gawn at last," said No. 5 as she turned down her sleeves; she had been scrubbing the street doorsteps and soon the sun would whiten them. A hard-faced, harassed woman is No. 5, with a husband in irregular employment and a handful of children of whom only two are yet able to maintain themselves.

"Born for trouble," commented No. 9, her arms akimbo, staring at the drawn blinds. "Bad luck all his life, ever since his accident."

"I never heard the rights of that," No. 5 remarked in a tone that conveyed a request for information.

"One of his father's own barrels rolled down on him in the

cellar at 'The Grapes,'" explained No. 9, "an' him no more than a boy. Some said it was a drayman's fault, but there, you never know. Broke his hip joint, his mother told me. Lord, they took him to hospital after hospital. What that pore child suffered, but he was always lame after it and that fretted him. His two brothers were fine strong lads and played about the street with the gels, while he had to lean over the gate and look on. Sometimes the others would laugh at him."

"If a child don't ail itself, it don't have much pity for them what do," admitted No. 5.

"Still he ought to bin happy enough," said her neighbour, pointing to one of the darkened windows on the first floor. "He was his father's pet and there was all the money he could want. His mother took him to Brighton, or Marget or Southen' every summer of his life to strengthen him, and one year his father took him to some furrin part, though I don't hold with dcin' that kind of thing meself. It's ten to one if a furriner don't do you more harm than good; I wouldn't trust any of them. But it was Maggie Platt did for him in the end."

"Well I never," cried No. 5. The discussion was now too intimate to be continued across the railing, she stepped out and walked to her neighbour's gate. "I thought," she said mysteriously, "the girl was engaged to his brother George what was killed in the war."

"They were engaged," admitted No. 9 almost viciously, "but it was poor Dick what's lying in there that loved her, ever since she was a saucy little slut with her carrotty hair in pigtails an' her skirts above her knees. I've seen him stand by that gate from after tea till Maggie's mother called her in, an' never an eye for anybody else. When George an' Maggie got engaged, he was that ill they never thought he'd recover; ploomoniar of the lungs they called it, but I knowed better. Dick's father saw her father to see if anything could be done."

"That's a rum 'un," interposed No. 5, with strong disapproval.

"He jest worshipped the boy," explained No. 9 simply, "an' I don't think George would have broke his heart about Maggie. He wanted to go to sea, that's what he wanted."

"I remember," said No. 5, "hearing tell of it from No. 15."

"Maggie wouldn't look at Dick," continued No. 9, "though his father offered to set 'em both up in a public house he'd jest

bought, an' furnish it for 'em. You'd ha' thought a gel would ha' jumped at it, but no. Me lady was in the City by then, earnin' her poun' a week."

"Gels do get beside themselves," admitted No. 5 sagely.

"I've had four of me own," agreed No. 9 a little wearily, "there's times you don't hardly know what they'll do next. ■ that ain't one thing it's another, but I'd have been on'y too glad if Dick had favoured one of 'em. Well, it wasn't to be. His father died the year after the war an' left him most of the money, and George was drowned on some ship, and then Dick begun to pick up, and we all thought he'd took a turn for the better."

"That must have bin about the time I come here," suggested No. 5, and her neighbour, nodding agreement, 'continued.

"Maggie had gone out of the street by then. Her mother was dead and her father got a house in Prospek Gardens up the road, and Dick would go down there and begun to take Maggie out. She let him spend his money—flowers, chocklets, theatres, pitchers, an' he really thought she was growin' fond of him. You never see such a change in anybody. Sometimes he'd talk to me about her over the back garden wall by the hour, till I was sick o' the gel's name. He thought he should get down to the country and buy a little place an' keep chickens and pigeons. He was always great about pigeons; liked 'em because they could fly; he told me he wished he'd been born a pigeon. Sech fancies! He got a manager in both his father's public's, an' plenty o' money comin' in. Look how he kep' the place," and as though by common consent the two women stared once again at the clean walls, the freshly painted doors and windows, the trim garden, the bright green railings, all in shrill contrast to the faded display on either side.

"That's only a fortnight ago," continued No. 9, "she told him it weren't no use. She wouldn't bury herself in the country for nobody, just hated it, so to speak, and she told him that she was walkin' out with the 'sistant manager in the shop she works in."

"That's a pity," said No. 5 kindly, "pore young feller."

"That was las' Monday it turned cold," said No. 9, "an' my Em'ly took me to the pitchers an' we come back late. Well, there he stood without a coat or a hat or boots leanin' over the gate talkin' to himself. I sent my Em'ly inside quick, an' I ast him what he was doin' out there in his slippers, ketchin' his death.

'That's just what I've done, Mrs. Claridge,' he sez, 'but there's Maggie playin' up an' down the street with the others and she hasn't come up to the gate yet, and I'm so afraid her mother will call her before I've time to say a word.' There, his voice almos' made me cry. It seems his mother had gone to see his other brother what live in Somerset an' he was alone in the house. I 'ustled him in, I could see he was very queer, an' nex' mornin' when the charwoman come, she knocked and told me he was in a bad way an' my Bill went for the doctor, but that weren't no good."

"You can't mend broken hearts with doctor's stuff," agreed No. 5. "I expect that 'll be the undertaker."

A smart energetic young man was approaching No. 7 his hat at a slight angle. He hummed a tune as he passed the gossips, and with good reason, for influenza was rampant and business brisk.

## TWO LEGACIES

By M. J. LANDA

M. J. Landa, born in Leeds, 1874. For many years a sketch writer in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons. For a time editor of the "Jewish World." Author of "The Alien Problem," "The Jew in Drama," and "Palestine As It Is," in addition to short stories, and, in collaboration with Mrs. Landa, several plays, the first of which "Red Ria" (one act) was produced by Miss Horniman at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester; recently Mr. and Mrs. Landa have published "Jacob Across Jabbok," a novel of Anglo-Jewish life.

"SHEEBEENS and sheenies!"

An interpolation by the lawyer, quoting his quondam client. The harsh inelegance of the alliteration, contemptuous and complementary in its implication, jarred on the super-sensitive soul of Mr. Septimus Lovelace. He was in a terrible quandary. His fleshy outer casing was already seared, tingling under the damning revelation that the "expectations," long awaited, from his uncle—just interred but not lamented—were tied up in brewery shares and slum property inhabited by Jews! Two topics that had drawn frothy anathema from him for years. His patience cracked.

"You quoted my uncle with relish," he snapped.

"You meant to say 'saucy,'" returned the lawyer, pointedly.

Mr. Lovelace gazed blankly at the solicitor, who had paused in his reading of the eagerly awaited document. He detected an unholy gleam in the legal eye bent on him.

"Well, it's—er—awkward, for me," he managed to gasp.

"Your uncle," murmured the lawyer, in his most professional tone, "was a shrewd business man. Invested his money with acumen. He used to say Cohens and cocktails were certain coin collectors."

Lovelace exploded.

"Drop that impious irrelevance," he growled, irritably. "I could rattle off that sort of expression, if I so far forgot myself as to descend to vulgarity."

"As for instance," returned the solicitor, sceptical and provocative.

"Levites and licensed libertines, if you will have it," hissed Mr. Lovelace, red with indignation and shame at his inability to resist the serpent. Joyous, however, to relieve himself of a phrase which had taken some compilation in many difficult efforts to imitate his uncle's coarse felicity.

"The lawyer beamed approval. It meant business to see men in that mood.

"Of course," proceeded Mr. Lovelace pontifically, "when I enter into this inheritance, I can dispose of these properties—transfer the money to—er—more reasonable—that is, legitimate—I mean, more worthy enterprises."

"Wait," commented the lawyer, with something like a chuckle. "Let me conclude the reading of the will."

And to the legatee's horror he proceeded to recite, with extreme unction, a clause which intimated that no attempt must be made to dispose of either the shares or property within ten years!

A thunderbolt could not have had a more stunning effect than this edict upon Mr. Lovelace. He seemed to have been suddenly surrounded by a horde of grinning brewers and jeering Jews. His uncle had detested his views, he knew, and had thus planned a posthumous, fiendish revenge. He groaned, he fumed. In his heart, he cursed. Almost on his lips were words of rank blasphemy.

"What do you advise?" he asked, appealing helplessly.

"Grin and bear it," was the heartless reply.

"I don't see why I should grin," exclaimed Lovelace, fiercely.

"There's no compulsion," returned the lawyer, imperturbably. "It's not in the bond," he supplemented, purporting to examine the will closely.

That was a deliberate turning of the blade of Lovelace's own knife against him—an application of one of his pet platform phrases. He winced.

"It's a wanton insistence of the dead hand," he tiraded. "Can't the courts be induced to set it aside?" It was a cry from the depths of an agonised soul.

"My profession," answered the lawyer, with solemn gravity, "will pass you a hearty vote of thanks if you decide to contest the condition. It will be profitable—to us."

"It's—it's intolerable wickedness on the part of the old—

scou——. I mean, he meant to humiliate me, to hound me out of the public position I have gained for myself as a temperance advocate——”

“And as a rabid Jew-hater,” added the lawyer, quietly. “I daresay you have guessed right. He—ahem!—as you correctly suspect, despised your views, thought them hypocritical, assumed as the only avenue to notoriety possible to a man of your extreme opinions.”

Mr. Lovelace shuddered. He pulled himself together.

“Of course,” he sneered, “a worldly minded materialist like my uncle could not appreciate sincere, righteous motives.”

“He called it downright humbug,” pursued the lawyer.

“Stop,” screamed the luckless heir. “How dare you talk to me in that insulting fashion?”

“I am using language less strong than you have done of your uncle, who has been exceedingly generous.” The lawyer’s tone gave the impression that he was thoroughly enjoying the spectacle of Mr. Lovelace in the toils and increasing the constriction. “Your uncle was my friend, as well as my client. He knew you—through and through.”

Mr. Lovelace squirmed.

“Go on,” he muttered. “I must bear my cross.”

“Yes,” murmured the lawyer, drily, “your uncle predicted that you would use those words. I had my instructions to convey his opinion of you, with his profound compliments.”

That staggered Mr. Lovelace; completely sobered his intemperate spirit for a moment. His uncle was astute to devise these pinpricks from the grave.

“Didn’t it occur to you,” he said, acidly, attempting the superciliously reproachful strain, “that it was a gross iniquity?”

“None of my business.”

“And you connived, I see. You are taking a positive delight in rubbing in my uncle’s contempt.”

The lawyer rose.

“Mr. Lovelace,” he said, with ominous quietness, “I am neither a Jew nor a publican. I don’t propose to put up with your cant, nor to turn the other cheek. Your uncle’s business was profitable to me; I collected his rents. But I decline to serve you. Candidly, I cannot afford the risk of losing my Jewish clients. Nor have I the least desire to insult them.”

Mr. Lovelace collapsed. He apologised profusely, sought sympathy.

"It's a bitter pill," he whined.

"A well-gilded dose," was the brutal rejoinder.

"But," with some effort at hauteur, "Midas long ago discovered that gold was indigestible."

"And Midas had asses' ears," concluded the lawyer, scornful of the specious display of classical knowledge.

Mr. Lovelace walked out into the wilderness. A world of sharp unsparring thorns. Public obloquy. Unanimous glee at his discomfiture. His long serial dream, during his hard struggles in a small business, and his over-zealous labours to gain publicity, had ended in a wild nightmare. He had conjured up visions of the day when he would be free from financial worries, when his name would be in all men's mouths. But he had not anticipated such a gross travesty. It was a cruel joke on the part of fickle fortune.

"Ought to give up the legacy, if he's honest." That summed up the hints and innuendoes.

He had wrestled with the wickedly generous angel—and had been worsted, as a public remark, obviously intended for his overhearing, had affirmed would be the case. He was incapable of the strength to repudiate the heritage. Oh, yes, he was fain to confess—to himself, at any rate—that his critics and detractors had a gorgeous banquet of his cooked-up phrases. It was so easy to fling them all back at him. And how he suffered! Plangent night thoughts robbed him of sleep. They ebbed and flowed through the day. He saw a tidal wave of reproof in every public frown. There was a weird, diabolical playfulness in the trick of fate. It was the brewery that was most discussed in public, but it was the Jewish tenantry who haunted him mainly in the secrecy of his own despair.

Vivid in his memory was the idyllic picture he had drawn of himself as a landlord. ■ was the height of his ambition, the supreme mundane happiness, to his thinking, to go round each Monday morning to collect his rents. 'To be hailed as "the landlord" had been his most ardent longing.

What a fiasco was the realisation! The furtive looks of his tenants, their ill-concealed loathing—they called him "Haman," he knew—and yet their calm confidence in their power to resist him was galling. He could forgive the brewers and the publicans.

They were but the victims of historic, albeit misguided, human habits—if you looked at it closely. But the Jews! To his overwrought fanaticism, they were Satan's appointed myrmidons of evil and God's chosen scapegoats. And, despite his fulminations, his threats, his warnings, they did not fear him! Under his own roof! His one effort to impress his importance on them was a ludicrous failure. He had tried it on a meek-looking woman. She had listened patiently. Had then yawned.

"I am afraid," he said, with a simulation of dignity, "that you do not show a proper respect to me—your landlord."

"Where does it say in the English law that you must show respect to a landlord?" she had replied, with the Ghetto habit of putting questions.

To be snubbed by a Jewess! To have the English law calmly expounded to him from Semitic lips! She had intimated, too, that his Jewish tenants would remain law-abiding—and defy him. It maddened him.

His hatred quickened. He swore unto himself a violent rather than sacred oath that he would seize the first opportunity to make the Jews suffer. Yea, he would persecute. He did not flinch. Had he not historic warrant? Curious how he appealed to history—in the solitude of his own ignorance. His first fierce impulse was to evict his Jewish tenants—after due notice, naturally. But he speedily learned, to his dismay, that the consequences would be queer. And to himself disastrous.

Once the area had been thief-infested, criminal, insanitary, a plague spot. The Jews had driven out the jail-birds, had transformed an underworld. The facts were on record in the reports or the police and the medical officer of health. The Jews were the one sure safeguard against a relapse of the neighbourhood!

"There's something wrong with Destiny," he moaned. "It's got bitten with the modern craze. It's jazzing. Here am I, devoting my life to unselfish service and everything goes wrong, while my uncle, the reprobate, is actually made to appear a public benefactor!"

He plunged into dejection, brooded, planned, schemed. Fed his bigotry on the cankered fruits of disappointment. It flourished like a foul weed in the forcing house of his miasmatic stupidity. It was his ghoulish delight to inflict pain by his weekly visitation to the Ghetto. Besides, it saved the fees of an agent.

And thus ■ came to pass that one Monday morning a strange sight met his gaze. Startling! Surely the hateful Jews were meditating the destruction of his property. So blatantly, so impudently. Actually with laughter!

They had collected timber and straw in all the back yards. Were piling them into sinister-looking structures. Dry inflammable material. Incipient bonfires! Monstrous!

He asked no questions. He acted on intuition. Precipitantly. He prided himself on promptness.

"Take these things down," he commanded, sternly.

"Why?"

"Because I, the landlord, order you," he screamed, infuriated by their irrepressible questioning habit.

They refused. They shrugged their shoulders. They offered no explanations. Ignored his presence. Went on with their mysterious labours.

He rushed off to a lawyer. Dashed from there to a magistrate. Would have swooped down on the police had he not been prevented. In his frenzy he would have had all his Jewish tenants immediately arrested. But the English law was so obtuse, so slothful—"subsidised by the Jews," he had once dared to assert. Here was proof!

He writhed under the official delay, but summonses had to be served and it was the third day before his peremptory demand for punishment was heard in the magistrate's court. The Jews were there in festive finery. They were beyond understanding. Not a scrap of fear did they betray. Not a sign of alarm. They were animated and happy.

But, grasping tightly a copy of the terms of tenancy, he was sure.

"Even," as his lawyer put it—rather mildly, he thought—"if there is no incendiary intent, the material is highly inflammable, and the conditions expressly prohibit the erection of out-houses or structures of any kind, temporary or permanent, without the permission of the landlord."

A Jewish lawyer put the case for the tenants. He, too, had the Ghetto habit of asking questions.

"Has my friend ever heard of the Feast of Tabernacles?" he inquired.

"What has that got to do with it?" asked Lovelace's lawyer.

"Rather a good deal," was the reply, and he launched into a disquisition on the Mosaic ordinance to build booths in remembrance of the shelters in the wilderness, and the modern interpretation that the structures were probably the old harvest homes of Israel. Perhaps the magistrate knew something about it.

"Oh, yes," was the response from the Bench. "I know all about the practice of the Jews celebrating Tabernacles, the Harvest Festival, by setting up wooden booths with straw roofs in gardens and back-yards, and taking their meals in them.

"A quaint idea," he added, "but I believe Disraeli has elaborated it beautifully by saying that a race that persists in celebrating their vintage, although they have no fruits to gather, will regain their vineyards."

"Yes, in *Tancred*," corroborated the Jewish lawyer.

"Don't you know of the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles and its customs?" the magistrate asked Mr. Lovelace. There was a note of pitying censure in the question.

"I know nothing of vintages and modern tabernacles," answered the landlord stiffly.

"Strange, isn't it," commented the Jewish lawyer—again that exasperating Ghetto peculiarity—"for one who is well known as a heavy holder of liquor shares and has only Jewish tenants?"

Mr. Lovelace could only glare, speechless.

"But—but the covenant of the tenancies," pleaded his advocate, desperately. "More important, at the moment, I submit, than the Scriptural covenant applicable to Palestine centuries ago."

"Ah, yes," returned the magistrate suavely, "since you insist on that, I cannot overlook it. Seeing that the tenants have hitherto enjoyed the privilege of erecting these booths unmolested, Mr. Lovelace has, in the opinion of the Bench, acted arbitrarily, even foolishly, and has unnecessarily, disturbed these inoffensive people in the practice of their religion, in what is an ancient and picturesque custom that preserves tradition and brings romance into their dull lives. It does no harm and has some value.

"But the tenants have committed a technical breach of their agreements, and the court must mark its sense of that infraction, without, however, mulcting them in costs. The decision of the Bench is that these structures must be removed within seven days."

Then a strange thing happened. The Jews tittered, swelled the cachinnation into a roar of laughter, then stood up and cheered

lustily. They were turned out of court, but to Mr. Lovelace's utter bewilderment, they were inordinately cheerful. Their demeanour denoted triumph. What a singular and stubborn people ! When he had just succeeded in having them publicly admonished and in asserting his power as landlord !

But the evening papers enlightened him. Made merry at his expense by pointing out that the magistrate was evidently aware that the Festival would be over in seven days !

Many a non-Jewish visitor was entertained in the back-yard tabernacles that joyous, permissive week. The wise *cadi* was freely toasted in beverages from which Mr. Lovelace drew his dividends, and the final day of the Festival, which coincided with the magisterial limit, was never more aptly celebrated as the Rejoicing of the Law.

Two legacies—and that of Lovelace, with public approval, was made to conform with that of *Leviticus* !

## MY VENETIAN SINGER

By GERTRUDE LANDA ("AUNT NAOMI")

Mrs. Gertrude Landa, born 1878, was the first to write a Ladies' London Letter in the provincial press. She is the sister of the late Samuel Gordon, the novelist. Her first novel, "The Case and the Cure," was published when she was still in her teens. Under the nom-de-plume of "Aunt Naomi" she has written two volumes of "Jewish Fairy Tales" which are known in America as well as here.

THE opera was *Romeo and Juliet*. I sat entranced under the spell of the music, but my thoughts were elsewhere. They wandered, naturally enough, from the make-believe Verona on the stage to the real Verona I once visited. I smiled as I recalled the horse-trough receptacle full of visiting-cards shown to the curious as the tomb of Juliet. I seemed to lose all interest in the opera after that reflection. My thoughts, still flowing naturally, wandered off to Venice.

Ah, Venice! Who can ever forget the first impressions of that enchanting fairy city set in the silver lagoon? Romeo was singing now. The dulcet sweetness of his tones formed a charming accompaniment to the delicious memories that rushed through my thoughts.

Once again I was in a gondola, lulled to a reverie by the soft lapping of the water against the sides of the boat. Lazily, gracefully, stealthily almost, it picked its way through the tortuous narrow canals to the open lagoon. The sun was setting, and what vision is there more beautiful than the setting of the sun in Venice?

All along the vast firmament stretched a wondrous portcullis of ever-varying hues. Lower and lower the gate of evening was drawn down the skies. Azure blue was its crown high up in the heavens, red and fleecy gold were its bars, until where heaven and earth and water met, a dazzling ray of golden light marked the entrance to Paradise! And over all lay the soft silence of the Venetian autumn evening, broken only by the rhythmic lapping of the water on the gondola.

The glistening ferro at the prow described a graceful curve, the Euganean Mountain, with its glowing peak, disappeared. The fairy city of twinkling lights over which the beauteous veil of twilight hung, rose from the sea before me. Soon my gondola was in the shadows of the broad Canareggio.

Above the restful silence of that delicious evening came the sound of a fresh young voice of rare sweetness. I turned an inquiring gaze upon my gondolier, supple, silent, and graceful on the platform of the boat behind my seat. Even he was under the spell of the magic twilight, and it was some moments before he caught my gaze.

"The ghetto!" he said with a note of contempt, indicating, by a toss of his head, the buildings to the left.

I bade him slow down. He allowed the gondola to drift.

"Serenata?" I queried.

"No, signora," with another gesture of disgust.

But the instinct of the guide in the man prevailed. He pointed to a figure sitting on the canal bank with legs dangling over the water. It was the youth who was singing. He might have been seventeen or more. I indicated that I would like to be nearer.

What it was the youth sang I knew not. I could not even say whether it was Italian. I half wished it was Hebrew, but I caught no word that I could recognise. I was enraptured by the beauty of the voice. Pure and fresh it rose on the evening air—a hymn to the twilight for aught I could tell.

Suddenly the youth saw me. His eyes had in them the soft poetical glow of the Jew. I held out a coin, for his clothes were ragged. A crazy boat was at his feet. In a moment he had sprung into it, had seized the oar, and was propelling the craft towards me.

My gondola made a quick movement away. I turned inquiringly towards my gondolier. He said something in a tone of protest. He was afraid, seemingly, that I was giving the tip which I should reserve for him to the unknown singer. There was anger in his swarthy, brigand-looking face, greed in his steely eyes.

I turned to the softer eyes of the singer, who was alongside now. He held out his hand, took the coin, doffed his ragged cap, and in the sweetest tones I had ever heard from the lips of a youth, said:

"Grazia, mia bella signora."

I am but a woman. I bowed to the compliment. I would have spoken with the singer, even with the very few Italian words at my command, but with swift strokes my gondola was shot away from him. Sweeter rose the youth's song; he waved his cap gaily—he kissed his hand. I kissed mine in return. Then my gondola turned into the Grand Canal, and the song ceased.

I looked about me. Oh, yes. I had almost forgotten. I was in the theatre. Romeo had just ceased. The people were applauding. Were they applauding my singer? Was this song I had just heard the same? I seemed a little bewildered and walked out into the cool promenade.

"What do you think of the new tenor?" said a voice in my ear.

It was Kapinski, the famous critic.

"Who is he?" I asked.

"I have been introduced to him this evening," he said, "and I don't think this Italian name on the programme is his real name. I have a fancy he is one of us."

"I have that fancy, too," I replied. "Could you introduce me?"

He said he would be delighted. I waited after the opera in the saloon. The tenor's eyes attracted me the moment I saw him. He gazed curiously at me, and held my hand longer than the occasion necessitated. I paid him some compliment on his debut.

"Grazia, mia bella signora," he returned—and then I remembered!

"Once in Venice——" I said.

"Never have I forgotten your kindness," he answered in quaint, broken English. "Luck came to me that night. The coin you gave me—I wear it always on my watch chain."

"And the song?" I said.

"I sang again to-night in *Romeo and Juliet*."

That was why I remembered.

## AVE, AMOR, MORITURI TE SALUTANT

By W. L. GEORGE

Walter Lionel George, born in Paris, 1882, died 1926. Made a special study of the Woman Question. Hailed as "the Man who knows Women." Educated successively as analytical chemist, engineer, barrister, soldier and business man; took to journalism about 1907; contributed to most London publications on topics ranging between the art of the troubadours and the finance of railways; specially interested in feminism and its subsidiaries: marriage and divorce problems; in labour and sex questions generally. Served in the French army during the War. Section Officer in the Ministry of Munitions.

Publications: various political and economic works; novels: "A Bed of Roses," 1911; "The City of Light," 1912; "Israel Kalisch," 1913; "The Making of an Englishman," 1914; "The Second Blooming," 1914; "The Stranger's Wedding," 1916; "Blind Alley," 1919; "Caliban," 1920; "Ursula Trent," 1921; other works, "Woman and To-morrow," 1913; "Dramatic Actualities," 1914; "Anatole France," 1915; "Olga Nazimov," "Stories," 1915; "The Intelligence of Woman," 1917; "A Novelist on Novels," 1918; "Eddies of the Day," 1919; "Hail, Columbia," 1921; "A London Mosaic," 1921.

OFTEN the woman threw him a covert glance, in which was some unease. The man was French, that was certain, for he was dark and, though but thirty or so, blurred in outline. He had no grace of bearing, no striking ugliness; he was just a man who read an illustrated paper, without interest or looked through the window at the flying grey fields of the Franche-Comté. But at times he looked at the woman, more satisfied with her than with other things, for she was woman; his glances, less profound in their searching than she knew, troubled her intensely, this Englishwoman, unused to any but careless attention; she had lived too long in her north to realise that man can look upon woman without committing adultery. Already he had summed her up as *une Anglaise*, decided that she was not ill-looking but cold, hostile. And because she ostentatiously avoided his eyes,

not naturally as would one of his countrywomen, he knew her for a prude. Well, he reflected, then let her be a prude. It was none of his business.

The train steamed on, slowly rising into the Jura on its way to Switzerland. Often it passed through tunnels, and the woman kept her strained eyeballs on the corner where the man sat, dimly outlined by the oil-lamp. He terrified her, for he was a man and she, a teacher at Strudleigh school, venturing from the Midlands to Switzerland in pursuit of a French accent, was unused to man. Such men as teachers and clerics she knew and did not fear; they bred in her at best a faint but not unpleasant disquiet, but such men as this, with bold eyes, an air of caring for no authority, terrible untamed men who ranged the road with things to sell and doubtless drank, swore, were free with women, such men were dangerous. For she did not know what he might be plotting. She had visions of murder, of blood, almost worse visions of gallantry, for she knew she could fight for her life while she would doubtless look foolish when repelling an advance. But the man did not move. He even ceased to appear interested in her fair hair and blue eyes. So peace returned to her, such peace as a cat may know when, hunted by dogs, it has climbed a tree and watches its foes below. The train rumbled on, puffing, entered another tunnel. She could see faintly the white smoke streaming over the black walls; its monotonous flight lulled her, obliterated the man. It vanished, and she began to think of common things.

Suddenly all her senses leapt into life. She heard a cry, and a brilliant light flashed along the wires at the side of the tunnel; she knew that she was on the floor, that among the great sounds about her she had heard her dressing-bag fall. She could not move, she discovered, but a new world had formed about her. As she lay she found that her head was much above her feet. A running light passed the window. The man was standing up, clutching at the rack, with a face like a pierrot. Like a pierrot, she thought, and began to giggle, and could not cease giggling, giggling. There was a cry, then another, from the running light.

"Ah . . . Ah . . . *Nom de Dieu*——"

And as a shower of earth and brickwork burst through the window, blotting it out, protruding horribly through it red clay like a bleeding stump, she found that she too had been jerked ■ her feet by the cry of agony, the last blasphemy of the voice as the

earth stilled it. She too was clutching at the rack now, looking at the man. They listened. They heard faint noises, a few voices, then a violent report ahead of them.

"Ah . . ." she faltered, "what ■ it?"

"*La locomotive*," said the man, who apparently understood her, "■ *locomotive* . . ." He tried to speak again, moistened his lips with his tongue, but the words would not form.

And again, as they listened, they heard the distant noises. They heard them grow less. They found themselves listening to the groans and crackings of the roof. Unstirred silence fell on them. The woman tried to speak but could not frame a sentence. At last she uttered a hoarse :

"*Quoi ?*"

"*Un accident*," said the man. "*C'est un éboulement* . . ." Then, as he saw her uncomprehending face he found his educated foreign English. "The tunnel has fallen. We are buried."

"Buried——"

"Yes . . . *la locomotive* . . . it has exploded. You heard? . . . We are buried under the mountain."

"What is going to happen?" the woman asked at length.

The man shrugged his shoulders, ineffectually waved one hand.

"You mean that we are going to die?" said the woman slowly.

"To die," she repeated, "soon . . . I hardly understand——"

"*Nous étoufferons* . . . we stifle," said the man, "or . . ." he pointed at the ceiling, "the mountain . . . the mountain . . . it will descend——"

"Ah . . . yes . . . the mountain, you say . . . yes, we are going to die." The woman paused, buried one gloved hand into her yellow hair. "I cannot believe . . . yet, I suppose it is all over."

And suddenly she threw herself on the floor, babbling, staring, her hands clenched to her cheeks. Her everyday life welled up, Strudleigh, the black slums, the smokestacks, her father's vicarage, her pupils, little girls with pigtails, and the green fields beyond the clinker heaps. . . .

"Gone . . ." she screamed, "gone——"

The man kept fixed upon her his distended eyeballs. But the woman burst into tears, into great choking throaty gurgles that grated on his ear, tore at his most intimate fibre. He stepped forward, knelt by her side, slipped his arm round her shoulders,

raised her up, pressed her heaving body against his. And with both hands she clung to his neck.

"Oh," she whispered with closed eyes, "my God . . . to die like this . . . soon . . . I am thirty . . . thirty, do you hear . . . only thirty . . . and I know nothing, no life, no world, no love——"

"Ah, love," whispered the man, "love——"

"Love," the woman moaned, "I have waited, my God, oh, waited, thinking it would burst forth, like a waterspout from the sea, blazing with sunshine and clothed in the seven colours . . . love . . . love . . . and now it's too late——"

"No, no," whispered the man, holding her close, tortured by his own memories

"Too late, too late," the woman moaned, but she too clasped him to her.

"No, no," said the man faintly. He pressed his cheek against her wet cheek. The thick hot air about them, laden with the smell of earth, seemed to whip their senses to action. The terror of coming death, aphrodisiac, stinging, held their bodies. Their life essence surged furious in presence of death, clamouring that it must not die.

"Ah," cried the man, and she could hear him laughing wildly, "it is not too late."

She felt his lips upon her cheek, her neck; she allowed them in utter passivity to dwell, heavy pressed, upon her mouth. They fell upon her, separate and hot, like stripes. She swayed with his every movement. There was a film upon her eyes. Quite blindly her coiled arms drew him closer. She too pressed her mouth upon his, roughly, vengefully, as if defiant in fugitive life of the coming death. She felt his weight bearing her down, his tearing hands about her clothing, then the hot dryness of his fingers upon her breast.

Faintly she cried out.

But too late, for she could not resist. Even in later hurrying seconds the last rebellion of her modesty, the last fearful back-drawal of her femininity, her intimate fear of the male, all her life of cribbed desire, of crushed and ground-down hunger for joy, all her inbred impulses, were swept away on the impetuous hot wings of the passion gust.

"No . . . no . . ." she whispered, "no . . . no . . . let me go."

Down together they fell, unconscious atoms awhirl, fulfilling

in immense relief their necessary destiny, desperate in their joy of accomplishment, urged on and goaded by this race for survival against the coming blackness. And no sound was heard soon, save the groaning of the laden roof. Upon the floor, disordered, befouled with dirt and grit, the two bodies lay close clasped. The man moved, as if to draw away, as does a male after satisfaction. But with clenched hands the woman held him and, very slowly, her eyes closed, pressed upon his cheek lingering grateful kisses.

In the midst of a small crowd of railwaymen, reporters, hurrying doctors and Red Cross officials, the man, who had regained consciousness, was holding the woman in his arms. Too busy with their tasks none heeded the couple, but pressed about the mouth of the tunnel whence issued now a file of stretcher-bearers carrying distorted and broken burdens. The man feverishly held up the woman to the wind from the mountain, felt his heart leap as she opened her eyes. Half-leading and half-carrying her he took her to the iron bridge that spanned the gorge. She looked at him dully, without taking in details, unconscious, as was also he, that their clothing hung about them, fastenings torn away, that the whiteness of her breast flaunted before his eyes. They were too tense, too wrenched, too utterly far from the world. Some time the woman looked, then turned her head away, looked at him again.

"You . . ." she said. "I know you——"

"Yes," said the man gently, "we are saved——"

"Saved? Oh . . . yes, oh, I remember. We were buried . . . yes, oh, I remember . . . but . . . you . . . I know you. . . . I remember . . . I know you——"

The man looked fearfully into the expanding blue eyes.

"You . . . oh . . . yes. I know. I know now. . . . You . . . oh, what have you done . . . I remember now . . . you . . . you ruined me . . . ruined me——"

"But——"

"Don't speak . . . Dishonoured . . . yes, I'm dishonoured. . . . Oh, dishonoured after all these years——"

Suddenly she found she was struggling, screaming aloud the horror of her loss. Her universe had fallen about her. The joy

of the blackness had come back as a horrid ghost to jeer at her shame, to pit itself against her traditional purities.

"Let me go," the woman shouted, "let me go——"

He felt her elbow driven into his throat, saw her leap the parapet, saw her body twirl hideously down and down into the gorge.

## AN OUTLIER FROM HIS TRIBE

By GILBERT FRANKAU

Gilbert Frankau, born 1884. A master of narrative. His mother, "Frank Danby," enjoyed a great reputation as an authoress. Began writing in 1910. Travelled round the world 1912-14. Took his commission in October 1914. Transferred to R.F.A., March 1915; appointed Adjutant to his Brigade, and proceeded overseas in that capacity; fought at Loos, Ypres, the Somme; promoted Staff Captain for special duty in Italy, October 1916; invalided from the Service and granted rank of Captain, February 1918.

Publications: "One of Us," 1912; "Tid'apa," 1914; "The Guns," 1916; "The City of Fear," 1917; "The Woman of the Horizon," 1917; "The Judgment of Valhalla," 1918; "One of Them," 1919; "Peter Jackson, Cigar Merchant," 1919; "The Heart of a Child" (dramatic version of Frank Danby's novel, in collaboration with Aimée de Burgh Frankau), 1920; "The Seeds of Enchantment," 1921; "The Love-Story of Alictte Brunton," 1922; "Men, Maids and Mustard-Pot," 1923; "Gerald Cranston's Lady," 1924; "Life and Erica," 1925; "Maasterson," and "My Unsentimental Journey," 1926; "Twelve Tales," 1927; "So Much Good," 1928; "Dance, Little Gentleman," 1929; "Martin Make Believe," 1930; "Concerning Peter Jackson and Others," 1931; "Christopher Strong," 1932; "Wine, Women and Waiters," 1933; the "Peter Jackson Omnibus," 1933.

### I

I HAD this story straight from the mouth of a certain celebrated brother-novelist during a week we spent together—mostly in Connie's bar—at Mentone.

Said my celebrated brother: Personally, I've always liked Jews; to begin with because they've got brains; and to go on with, they're not in the least like the rest of us—however much they may assimilate our customs. They're a separate people you know—a people without a country. To understand them at all, one has to think of them as an international clan, as a tribe within the other tribes. And talking of that, I'd like to tell you about Harold Ingram.

Harold Ingram doesn't sound particularly Jewish, does it? And to look at, Harold's even less of a Jew than the name implies. He's big, six-foot-one in his socks—and his hair, though there's a trace of curl in it, is very nearly Viking-colour. His eyes are Viking-colour, too—blue, with the far-away-sea-look. And his nose, except for a queer dilation about the nostrils, is almost pure Greek. Harold, I may tell you, did three pretty good years at the Front. He wasn't wounded; but in other ways the war has left its mark on him. He still carries himself like a soldier, for instance; and "tooth-brushes" his blond moustache; and if you go to one of his big shoots, you'll find the whole thing run like manoeuvres.

Harold's friends are mostly Christians—though he's not one of your Jew-hating Jews by any means. And his religion isn't Jewish, either. He's an agnostic—like most people nowadays. So that, on the whole one wouldn't go far wrong in describing him as an outlier from the main tribe.

But for all his outlying habits, Harold Ingram's very nearly as much of the tribe as your latest immigrant into Whitechapel or Jaffa. A man's father, you see, can't really break the entail of that particular clan by buying a place like Bartlett Towers.

Bartlett Towers, of course, is *the* Bartlett Towers and belonged to the Pomroys, till *they* broke the entail and sold it, just about twenty years ago when Lloyd George made his first raid on the land-owners, to Simeon Ingram, who left it—along with about half-a-million in money and half-a-dozen directorships—to this outlying son of his. The moment the war was over, Harold put some of that half-million into building a couple of new wings to the place; and devilish well he did it, too—as even Janet Pomroy admitted after she'd got over her first shock at the "sacrilege."

Janet Pomroy and Ingram—I'm trying to tell you this story just as it happened, without any frills or furbelows—were staying at the Towers with about twenty other people who don't matter, last October. She's a dear girl, is Janet—though a bit of a "gold-digger." And just about as good-looking as the rest of the Pomroys.

Janet's rather tall, twenty-six, and very dignified. Her hair's jet black—shingled, of course—though I think she made a bit of a mistake when she had the scissors to it. And her eyes match her hair; so that if you add a very pale complexion and a very red

mouth, you'll get a picture—barring the short hair, of course—of the type that used to be fairly popular in the 'sixties.

She is a bit Victorian, is Janet. Artful, don't you know—always with one eye on the main chance and the other on "the family." And I knew—the moment I saw them together—that the main chance, at that particular house-party, was Harold.

Perhaps I've put that rather crudely. It's perfectly possible—in fact, liking Janet as I do, I'm quite willing to admit it's perfectly probable—that she had a *tendre* for Harold Ingram. But her main *tendre*—I'm absolutely certain—was for Bartlett Towers. She practically told me so, not in so many words, of course—Janet's far too subtle for *that*—on the first night of our stay, when I took her down to dinner. "Grandfather never *ought* to have sold it," she said. "He ought to have married money instead of marrying for love. After all, when one owns anything as historical as the Towers one has certain duties."

And I said, having just one more glass of bubbly than was absolutely good for me, "I came to shoot. I gather you're hunting."

That *was* a bit crude. And Janet told me off for it—as only a girl like Janet can. "If that's meant to be an epigram," said she, "I think it's about the poorest you've ever made!" So after that I subsided—and watched the hunt from a safe distance, chuckling a little every time she turned her fox.

The fox, I imagined, was safe enough. After all, Harold—at forty—should have been able to take care of himself. And I don't mind telling you I never dreamed how close I had got to the truth till one evening—the last but two of my stay—when Harold asked me, quite suddenly, while we were sitting alone in his library, "Would you marry a Jewess if you happened to fall in love with one—or would you be too much afraid of what you're always calling 'The Clan'?"

I told him—any fool could have seen, by the look in those blue eyes, what the fellow was really driving at—that the clan-theory, like all other theories, had its exceptions. And when that didn't satisfy him, I gave an instance—in our own circle—of one mixed marriage that had turned out an unmixed success.

"It's a risk, though," he said. "It's bound to be a risk. We're Easterners; and you're Westerners. Even when we think

along your lines, our thoughts bring us to different conclusions." Which was so true that I didn't attempt to contradict.

True, or not, however, the risk didn't stop Janet's hunting; and as luck would have it, I was in at the death. Eavesdropping? Well, no. At least, not exactly. I couldn't help myself, you see. Because Janet made that particular kill in pretty thick cover—next day while we were shooting Big Wood.

I happened to be the next gun to her and Harold, with nothing between me and them but a blackberry hedge and a few trees. We were at the last stand by then—and the beaters were just starting to tap—and *she* said, so loudly that I couldn't help overhearing, "Oh, Mr. Ingram, I've got a jammed cartridge. Do you think your loader could get it out for me?"

Harold, of course, wouldn't let his loader do the job. He went over and did it himself—taking one of his guns with him. And after that—and this only shows what a man *will* do when he's gone off the deep end—he didn't go back to his own place ■ all; but just stayed there talking with Janet, while the beaters came nearer and nearer.

He'd forgotten I was so close, but I'm not sure Janet had. She's a bit of a puss-cat, is Janet: besides being a bit of a gold-digger—and she and I hadn't had much to say to one another except "Good-morning" since our little spar at the dinner-table. Anyway, she spoke about me; and said what a rotten shot I was, and something about my books.

"But you like him, don't you?" she went on; and when Harold said, "Yes. He's about the best pal I've got," her "Really" was spoken in the kind of voice that kind of girl uses when she means, "How extraordinary!"

I'd have moved away then—if I could have done so without running the risk of being peppered by my right hand neighbour. But the leaves were still too thick to do it without shouting to him. So I stayed put, hoping they wouldn't say any more about me. And as it happened, they didn't. They began to talk about each other—and about The Towers—and in about two minutes I heard Harold say, "This place would be yours if it hadn't been for my father. You love it, don't you? I know you do. That's why I've been thinking——"

The first bird came over at that moment. But neither of them fired at it. And I let it go too—being more of a sportsman than Janet gave me credit for.

"You've been thinking——" she prompted; and Sarah Bernhardt herself couldn't have put more meaning into the sentence.

"I've been thinking," answered Harold, "that if you love the Towers so much, it's just possible that you might be able to put up with their owner. I love the Towers too—Janet. But I love you more. I want to marry you."

"To marry *me*," said Janet—just as though it weren't the oldest cliché in the British drama.

"Yes—you—who else?" said Harold. And after that, it was all over except the worrying.

Good word, that, "worrying." Describes the thing to a T. Because when the rest of the birds came over, Harold never hit one of them. He missed a woodcock, too—the first of the season. And Janet, with her sixteen-bore, wiped his eye for him. Which, if you consider things, proves a good deal.

As I indicated when I began, I like Janet Pomroy. There's something pretty intriguing about a young woman who can hold straight at a zig-zagging woodcock less than a minute after she's exchanged her first kiss with the man she's made up her mind to marry. But knowing Harold's tribe as I do, I couldn't help wondering—when they announced their engagement that evening—whether she was quite the type to make married life really happy for him. The tribal women aren't quite as matter-of-fact as that, you see. *Their pulses race.*

However, Harold didn't seem to have noticed *that*. And next day, when the house-party broke up, he thanked me ■ least twice for "having helped him to see things in the correct perspective."

"You were absolutely right, old man," he said. "The clan theory's all very well as a theory. But it doesn't apply to *me*." And Janet too—having made her kill—thanked me, not verbally you understand, but with her eyes, for not having hindered the hunt.

All the same, I went on wondering about the thing. And three weeks later, when I ran into the two of them at the Embassy, I wondered still more.

It's the fashion, nowadays, to pretend that dancing's just exercise. And perhaps it is, in certain cases. But a girl who's dancing with her *fiancé* oughtn't to be one of those certain cases.

She ought to wilt a little, and smile into the chap's eyes, and generally behave as though he meant something to her. And Janet didn't behave like that with Harold. She just danced with him as though he'd been a casual acquaintance. Tolerated him, so to speak.

Harold—they came and had a drink with me half way through their dancing—didn't seem to notice *that* either. Still, I certainly thought he looked a shade less pleased with himself than he had done at The Towers. And I couldn't help observing, just as I left the club, the way he smiled over Janet's shoulder at another girl—a girl of the tribe with whom we were both acquainted.

Mind you, there was nothing in that smile. It was just a clan-smile; an exchange of clan-courtesies. Still I thought it significant. And somehow or other, it kept my imagination at work.

But I won't bore you with half the things I kept on imagining about Janet Pomroy and Harold Ingram. It's enough to say that I just got the idea, a little later on, that Harold—though he was far too loyal to tell me so—had begun to suspect he'd made a mistake. Only suspect, you understand. Nothing more than that. I want you to see the affair as I saw it—progressively—step by step.

As it turned out, I saw a good deal that autumn. Because Harold, who's just about as good in the saddle as he is with a gun, broke his collar-bone on his first day out with the Whaddon, and spent most of the time between November and Christmas lounging about Town. He used to lounge into my flat about tea-time—and stay till just before dinner, saying very little, but drinking rather a lot.

That was significant, too. You see, the men of Harold's tribe don't, as a rule, run to whiskies-and-soda, before dinner. So that when they do, you can be pretty certain they're in a mess.

Harold's mess, I needn't tell you, was of the subconscious kind. Still, I'm pretty sure that if I'd been one of his own people, I could have put him on to the truth. But as it was, I couldn't help him at all. He just used to sit opposite to me, brooding. That's the worst of being an outlier, you see. You have to settle things for yourself—not being able to ask the aid either of the tribe, who don't understand your having cut loose from them, or of the people outside the tribe, whom you don't understand because you're tribal.

That's a bit complicated, I'm afraid. But if you think ■ over, you'll see that it goes to the root of the whole matter. Harold being engaged to Janet, ought to have told *her* that something was troubling him ; just as, being my friend, he ought to have confided something of his trouble to me. But being essentially tribal (that's to say essentially Jewish) he kept all his dissatisfactions, and all his little fears, to himself.

It may be that I'm exaggerating those little dissatisfactions, *and* those little fears. It may be that—right up to the moment when Janet fixed the actual wedding-day—Harold's conscious mind, as apart from the subconsciousness of him, never had any real misgiving. But once the day *was* fixed, nobody but a congenital idiot could have failed to see that he was in a regular blue funk.

And that funk, believe me, was conscious enough ; the sort of funk that goes to bed with a chap at night and gets up with him in the morning, and generally makes his life about as pleasant as hell.

But don't misunderstand me. That funk didn't come from the fact that Harold Ingram *wasn't* in love with his Janet. It came from the fact that he *was* in love with her, and that she, not being of the clan, hadn't the least idea what was wrong.

I knew she hadn't the least idea—a day or two after I'd sent them my wedding-present—when I met her in Bond Street ; and she said, in that cool matter-of-fact voice of hers, " Harold and I are lunching at the Berkeley. You'd better join us. Three's company and two's none when one's engaged to a sentimentalist."

I didn't join them, having developed my own reasons, just about that time, for keeping out of Janet's way. But apparently someone else did. Because when Harold dropped in late that afternoon he poured himself four fingers—and repeated the dose.

But even that didn't really loosen him up. All he said was : " I suppose I'm a damn fool. But honestly I can't see it. Sentimentalist or no sentimentalist, when a man's in love with a girl, he *does* want to be alone with her every now and again."

## II

At this point, my celebrated brother, as is his habit, made a long psychological digression which I, a mere humble story-teller,

have thought it wiser to delete. When he resumed direct narrative, he resumed it thus :

You may say that the differences between Harold and Janet were only temperamental ; that the racial difference didn't enter into things at all. But just hear me out before you decide ; and while you're listening, remember that though Harold Ingram was never one of your Jew-bating Jews, his bias—as every outlier's —was primarily against rather than for his own tribe.

Harking back to Janet, though. I've said she hadn't the least idea. And of course she hadn't. Still, a week or so before Christmas, even she must have realised that something was not altogether O.K. in the State of Denmark. Because on two successive afternoons *she* dropped into my flat, chaperoned by a dear old aunt of hers ; and though she never, of course, got anywhere near down to brass tacks, she did ask, on both occasions, whether I thought Harold was looking fit.

I told her, on both occasions, that in my opinion Harold would " look fitter after the fifteenth." They were to be married on the fifteenth of January—no end of a show. But she didn't seem to relish my answer—any more than she relished what *she* called Harold's sentimentalism. And by the third week in December I was feeling pretty sorry for them both.

Still—sorry or not—I couldn't do anything ; not with less than a month to the wedding ; and presents simply pouring in. All I could do was to lie doggo—and try to get out of going to Harold's Christmas house-party at the Towers.

Naturally, *I* didn't want to go to that house-party. I had my own reasons for wanting to spend *my* Christmas out here. And I'd have done so, too, if Harold hadn't made such a fuss. He hadn't opened up again about Janet. But he hadn't given up lounging in on me either. And as it so happened, on the afternoon he succeeded in finally persuading me not to come south till after the wedding, I'd been reading Kipling's *Error in the Fourth Dimension*.

You know the tale of course. It's the one about Wilton Sargent, American ; how he flagged the Great Buchonian's " Induna." Kipling gave Wilton Sargent a " peculiarly oily and atrocious cigar, of the brand they sell in the tessellated, electric lighted bar of the Pandemonium "—after smoking which he.

Wilton Sargent, went back to his own country. But Kipling's Wilton Sargent was an easy proposition. He hadn't fallen in love, any more than he was honour-bound not to fall out of it. And besides . . .

So I don't want you to think that I cut Harold's Gordian Knot for him. The thing just occurred. Accidentally, we'll say. Though perhaps the older tribal deities. . . . But let's cut out the frills and furbelows. The thing occurred. And it occurred like this.

I got down to Bartlett Towers, in the old Bentley, some twenty-fours hours after the rest. We were only twelve to dinner that night—and Harold, who's a bit of a stickler for any sort of etiquette, had Janet next to him, with the deaf aunt on his other side. I had to face them ; and when the fizz came round, something—you can guess what—made me propose Janet's health. "To the fifteenth of January, Janet," I said, "and may we all be here for your golden wedding."

Mark you, I didn't mean the thing satirically. I meant "golden" in its usual sense. But though everybody else, Harold included, took it that way, Janet didn't. *She* thought I was getting at her. And after we'd come out from our port, she took me on one side.

"I want to talk to you," she said ; and her eyes were about as hard as I've ever seen them. "I want to know what you mean by insulting me."

"Insulting ?" said I.

"Yes. Insulting. How dare you suggest I'm only marrying Harold for his money."

I ought to have contradicted that, of course ; ought to have told her not to make an ass of herself. But somehow, I couldn't. And for quite a minute we stared at one another, like cat and dog. Then I said, rather quietly, "You must wear the cap if it fits you, my dear. What are you going to do about it ? Tell Harold that his best pal thinks you're only out for his shekels ?"

That defeated her—not so much my using the word "shekels," which was just an accident, but my suggestion that she should tell *him*.

"How dare you !" she said—in that best British drama voice of hers. "You'd like to smash the whole thing. You'd like——"

I *did* contradict her then—and pretty quickly. Some

things just can't be said, you see. And after we'd calmed down she asked me, quite decently: "Why *shouldn't* I marry him? Even if I'm not crazy about him. Why *shouldn't* I make him a good wife?"

"Only *because* you're not crazy about him," I lied to her—and left it at that.

I say "lied," because—honestly—I'm not at all sure that the French *mariage de convenance*, especially when a man's forty, isn't just as good a way of doing things as ours. *That* wasn't the real trouble. The real trouble—I'll prove it to you before I've finished—was Harold's Judaism. Judaism's so infernally possessive; particularly over women. It doesn't admit the sex-equality business: though it pretends to; just as it pretends to believe in that other equality business, Democracy.

Sorry if I'm being complicated again. Let me try to put the thing differently. When Janet said a "good wife," she really meant a "good sharer." If Harold had said it, he'd have meant . . . just what the first patriarchs of his tribe would have meant, allowing for that slight difference of outlook which even the oldest, stubbornest nation will acquire with the passage of time.

And if he could have explained himself in a few sentences, the sentences would have run something like this: "I love this girl. I'm going to marry her. I'm going to be marvellously kind to her and marvellously faithful. But in all the things that really matter, mental things *and* physical things, I'm going to rule the domestic roost, and she's going to *submit*."

That isn't only Jewish, of course. It's instinctive in the men of most tribes. But the instinct is stronger in Jews than in Gentiles, because the Jew's an extremist. Otherwise he couldn't have survived. However, let's stick to the story. Janet didn't tell Harold about our spat; and nothing of the slightest importance took place until, curiously enough, Christmas night.

We didn't dance on Christmas night. We had a kind of impromptu concert instead. And the star of our impromptu concert—all the Pomroys are crazy about music—was Janet.

Janet's rather queer about her singing. Always grubbing up some old tune or other. And that night—Heaven only knows why—after giving us half-a-dozen things I'd never heard of, she suddenly struck up one of the Hebrew Melodies, the one that ends:—

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,  
How shall ye flee away and be at rest !  
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,  
Mankind their country—Israel but the grave.

I don't call that verse very good poetry. And I never could see why Byron used the word "nest" in the middle of the third line after rhyming his first couplet "breast—rest." But the triple rhyme doesn't come out too badly with the music ; and anyway, it wasn't either the words *or* the music, only the implication of the thing, that caught Harold Ingram by the throat.

By the throat's the only way I can put it. Because it was only his adam's-apple, working up and down, and the word he muttered to himself while the rest of us were applauding, and Janet smiling at us across the big painted piano, that gave him away. For the word he muttered, wasn't English. It was the word "*goyte*," which is Hebrew for a Christian girl ; and how the devil Harold Ingram, who to my personal knowledge has never had a Hebrew lesson in his life, came to use that particular word, is a circumstance I simply can't explain.

Anyway, though, he *did* use it, under his breath, as a man swears to himself when his wife's looking the other way, and his adam's-apple (have you ever noticed the true Jewish voice isn't really nasal, it's throaty ?) *did* work ; and by the time we all went to bed that night, I *knew* that the clan-call was on him, as it's got to be on the men of his tribe unless the tribe's to be extinguished, painlessly, by intermarriage with ours.

And next day, Boxing Day, the moment they came down to breakfast, my intuition told me that things between him and Janet were at a crisis—at one of those funny dumb crises which happen between men and women who can't row.

He and Janet *had* never rowed, you see. They'd never got intimate enough with one another for a good round quarrel. They'd never really met on any *mutual* ground—and never would, until it was too late. That was one reason why, all through breakfast, I felt sorrier for Janet than I'd ever done before.

Janet, after all—at least according to her own lights—hadn't done anything wrong. She'd just made a bargain—and was prepared to carry out her share of it by making Harold a "good wife." Whereas Harold—as you'd realise if you think back to that question he put to me the night before his engagement—

must have gone against at least one of his lights from the very start.

Let me see, where was I? Oh yes, at breakfast. And a pretty uncomfortable breakfast, too. Harold might have been a deaf mute—and a sick one into the bargain. He never even looked at her; and the only time he looked at me his eyes reminded me of an innocent man's I once saw stand his trial for fraud. The men of Harold's tribe, you see—with just a few exceptions—don't defraud. Once they've made a bargain, they stick to it, even if they make a loss.

And my position wasn't a particularly jolly one either—feeling the way I did towards them both.

That morning—just to make matters really pleasant—it pelted so hard that we had to give up our plan of shooting the boundaries. And after we'd sent the dogs and the keepers away, Harold wouldn't join us at bridge. So Janet and I played cut-throat with the deaf aunt, while he shut himself up in his study till lunch. The others weren't bridgers. Or perhaps they didn't want to play with us. Most people have got some intuition when there's a triangle in a house.

Harold told us, when he came out of his study that he'd been writing letters. But I knew better. A man doesn't write letters when he's in the state Harold was. He just sits and thinks. Harold must have been thinking pretty hard, too, because over lunch, he and Janet had what the old-fashioned novelists used to describe as their first tiff. Nothing more than a *tiff*, mark you; no high words; only the politest disagreement about how we were all going to spend the afternoon. Janet wanted us to dance. *He* wanted to take her out in the car.

"A flip round'll do you good," he said. "I'm sure the others won't mind."

"Perhaps they won't," said Janet. "But I'd rather not."

"Then come round the stables."

Janet didn't answer—except with her eyes.

"How about a walk then? It's stopped raining."

"A walk! My dear Harold, I'd rather be dead."

One doesn't, of course, take modern slang *au pied de la lettre*. Everybody laughed—even Harold. But his laughter, I knew, had a hurt in it. He was annoyed, too; and when—just as we were getting up from the table—he showed it by turning to me and

saying, "I'm going out for a spin anyway, won't *you* come?" it was on the tip of my tongue to refuse.

I didn't however—because it would have looked funny. Especially after that game of cut-throat. "Right you are," I said. "I'll go."

So we went—not in his open Rolls but in my Bentley. Janet saw us off from the front porch, by the way; but she didn't say anything to either of us, didn't even ask if we'd be back to tea. She was too afraid for that. Yes—afraid. Trust a woman to be afraid at the right moment, even if her intellect can't supply any reason for the fear.

Even then, you must understand, there wasn't any real reason for Janet's fear. Any more than there was any real reason why I should drive right-handed out of Harold's gates down the Britlinghampton Road instead of left-handed for Ashenden. The Goddess Reason isn't one of the older tribal deities, you see. She was invented by the French, only about a century ago; and doesn't function much yet awhile, being contrary to human nature which prefers Inclination and Passion, and all sorts of queer reasonless half-gods when it's cutting Gordian Knots for miserable humanity.

"Miserable humanity"—I should say—pretty well covered the psychological condition of the Harold Ingram whom I tooled, on that Boxing Day afternoon, to Britlinghampton. He just sat with me—huddled with me, rather; saying nothing and seeing nothing; and when, a mile or so out of the town, I asked him if he'd care for a cup of tea at the Grand, all he said was, "Just as you like. It makes no odds to me."

And because I do like tea, I pulled up at the Grand—never realising that if there's one place more than any other which is *the* Mecca of Harold's tribe at Christmas time, it's that particular pub at Britlinghampton.

### III

My celebrated friend paused, as men of our trade will pause when in difficulties, at the word "Britlinghampton." Liquid refreshment, however, prevailed and after glancing towards the far end of the big comfortable bar to where a honeymoon couple, obviously of Harold Ingram's tribe, sat plunged in honeymooning, he went on.

As I was saying—and as I have always said—nobody ought to blame me for taking Harold to that particular pub. I didn't do it on purpose. I didn't realise even the possibilities of the thing, until he and I were through the big swing doors in the big glass-roofed hall. And even then I never drew the faintest comparison between what I'd done in real life, and what Kipling did in fiction when he gave Wilton Sargent that "peculiarly oily and atrocious cigar."

Besides, there was nothing either peculiarly oily, or peculiarly atrocious about the people of Harold's tribe whom we found all about us after we'd sat down at our little table on the edge of the dancing-floor under the palms. They were only just a bit . . . shall we say, exotic; just a bit more flamboyant about their clothes, just a little less restrained of voice, than the other people, than the folk Harold and I had left behind at the Towers.

You can't describe Jews *en masse*, any more than you can describe Christians *en masse*. At least not fairly. So let's put it that this particular lot radiated their own particular atmosphere—the same sort of clan-atmosphere, say which Simeon Ingram's house-parties must have radiated in the days before he started his son as an outlier by sending him to a public school.

That's fair all round, I think. But what struck me so queer was that the atmosphere affected me strongly a good while before it touched Harold. I sensed it at once. He didn't. Not for a good ten minutes. And when he did, he resented it—whereas I was merely interested, amused.

When a man's an outlier, you see, his primary bias is always against his own tribe. And though Harold didn't actually voice any resentment, his eyes—every time they flickered from one to another of the little groups who surrounded us—told their own tale. "These aren't my people," they seemed to be saying "These are the people I've broken loose from. And I'm glad I broke loose from them. They're not my kind."

And after I'd interpreted that look in Harold's eyes I began to have just an inkling of what I'd done.

Because, of course, he hadn't broken loose. He'd only tried to. And these people were his own kind, his very own folk; the clan-folk whose thoughts, travelling along his lines, would always reach his conclusions. Their exteriors didn't count—nor their religion. Judaism isn't a religion, anyway; it isn't even

a blood-tie. It's a mental attribute ; a soul-tie ; a bond of psychological and atavistic kinship.

I'm in controversial water here. But a good many Jews'll tell you I'm right. And certainly I was right in Harold's case. Because if ever I saw his psychological and atavistic kinship grip a man, I saw it grip him that afternoon.

The thing seemed to happen—and his eyes betrayed it—in three distinct stages. He started by resenting the clan. Then resentment gave way to tolerance. Till finally the strangest, most comprehending sympathy began to dawn.

" There's a lot of good in them, isn't there ? " his eyes seemed to be suggesting when he reached that third stage ; and on that—call me a Don Quixote if you like—I had the distinct impulse to get him away. But by then—though I did my best—he simply wouldn't go.

" What's the hurry," he said. " Let's wait and see them dance." So we waited to see them dance ; and once the orchestra struck up, the tribal deities did the rest. They usually do their jobs pretty thoroughly, do tribal deities ; but I must say that I *was* a little surprised at their efficiency in producing that particular girl.

No ! it *wasn't* the girl Harold had exchanged smiles with over Janet's shoulder at the Embassy. I'd never seen this one before. Nor he either. And what struck both of us (Harold commented on it the moment he'd focused her out of the crowd) was that she didn't look like a clan-girl at all—being straw-blonde, and rather tall, and very creamy of skin, and almost as clean-cut of feature as Harold himself. She had blue eyes, too—not sea-blue like Harold's, but lake-blue, with glints of sunshine in them.

I said sunshine. But sunshine isn't quite the word. Moonshine's better. Only it was a warm moonshine ; and every time those eyes met his, they put the comether on Harold Ingram—and put it on him for keeps.

Yes, " the comether." I can't call it anything else—and you wouldn't have called it anything else either ; if you'd seen the way Harold stared at her when she came by, the way he kept on staring all the time she was dancing round the room.

Love at first sight, you'd have called it. And you wouldn't have been so far wrong either. But I didn't understand that—not until, right at the end of the fox-trot, after they'd had three ncores, the girl and her partner (he happened to be her brother,

and perhaps that helped) tripped over a magazine that somebody had left lying ■ the edge of the parquet, and came down all of a laughing heap at our feet.

Curious wasn't it? Especially when you think how seldom people do fall when they're dancing. But not quite as curious as the weird "where-have-you-and-I-met-before" look I saw on both their faces when Harold helped her up, and she thanked him in that throaty voice which is the last shibboleth of the tribe. And nothing like as curious—at least in my humble opinion—as the fact that Doris Mendelson's father should have known Simeon Ingram in the days before Simeon Ingram made enough money to buy The Towers.

David Mendelson told us that immediately—almost before we realised who he was, or why he'd come over.

"I knew Harold when he was so high," he said, "before Doris or Arthur were born or thought of. Knew his dad too. You two young men don't look any too comfortable here. Now why not come over to our table—and make yourselves at home."

Harold—you may remember what I said about the clan not going back on its bargains—tried to make an excuse. So did I—though it suited my book well enough. But you can't fight tribal deities. And besides, David Mendelson, being of the tribe, simply wouldn't take No. So in the end we four—Harold with Doris and I with brother Arthur—followed him across the floor.

Lots of people stared at us as we went across the floor; and I gathered from one or two comments I overheard that David Mendelson wasn't the only one in that crowd who'd known Harold by sight. And when we got to that corner table I stared a bit, too; because I couldn't for the life of me understand how any woman quite so Hebraic-looking as Mother Mendelson could have produced anything quite so un-Hebraic as that straw-blond girl.

But Harold didn't seem to notice *what* Mother Mendelson looked like; and even if he had noticed it, he wouldn't have cared. All he cared for at the moment, was warm moonshine in lake-blue eyes. And after we'd had a cocktail, Doris asked him if he'd dance with her. And the way those two danced with one another set *my* pulses racing, as a man's pulses will race when he sees the chance he hasn't dared hope for, actually coming off.

It was all over then, really—all over from the moment Doris Mendelson snuggled her young head on Harold's shoulder and

her young body into his arms. She was his type, you see—the clan-type—the type of girl who'd never doubt his point of view, or his authority—who'd just submit, when the time came for submitting, without even questioning his right. Even by the time he brought her back to the table I could see, and I'm not sure Harold couldn't, that *her* pulses were racing, in the way Janet's pulses ought to have raced instead of letting her bring down that 'cock.

Have you ever noticed how one's faculty for observation goes when one's got a personal interest in any affair? I ought to be able to tell you a lot more about that afternoon—and about that evening, too. But all I really remember is the shamefaced look Harold gave me when, just as I'd got him to leave, old man Mendelson said, "Arthur and I go back to-morrow. But Doris and her mother are staying on. Perhaps you'll come and see them if you happen to be over this way again." Though I've a pretty fair recollection of the talk Harold and I had, very late that very same night.

He sat on the end of my bed, I remember. And asked me why the *hell* I thought he couldn't break his engagement. And I remember giving him no less than sixty-four different reasons why he couldn't break it; till, right at the end, he stood up; and stood over me; and looking straight ahead of him ■ a picture on the wall:

"Well, I'm *not* going to marry Janet. I'm going to marry Doris Mendelson. And if you'd only leave off trying to play the game, as you damn fools of Christians call it, you'd say you were as pleased as Punch!"

Whereafter my celebrated friend, who is rather famous for his *dénouements*, fell mum as a prairie oyster, till I—taking my courage in one hand and my cocktail-glass in the other—asked him for the end.

"End?" repeated he, glancing at the honeymoon couple, who, imagining themselves unperceived, were indulging in a slight tribal demonstration of mutual esteem. "Well, of course, I lost Harold Ingram's friendship. A man hasn't got much time to spare for the friends of his bachelorhood when he's—er—occupied like that. Naturally, they invite me to their big dinners. And I suspect she'll insist on making me a god-father. Because the tribe's rather keen on celebrities—and getting into the Press."

"But Janet?" I interrupted. "What about you and Janet? I thought that was going to be the crux of the tale."

"So did I," said he gloomily, "But Janet wouldn't have *me* at any price. I couldn't persuade her that the tribal deities alone were to blame for Harold's breaking off the engagement. She said I'd been Machiavellian; and that she couldn't marry anybody Machiavellian because 'she'd never know where she was'."

"Pity," said I—consolation seeming indicated.

My celebrated *confère*, however, after yet another glance at the tribal demonstration, by now somewhat hectic, brightened visibly.

"Think so?" he asked. "Or was it a let off?"

## "WELL, I'M BLOWED!"

*By* PAUL SELVER

Paul Selver, born London, 1888. Educated elementary school and later, by means of scholarships, at secondary schools and London University. Was a teacher for seven years. Served in army 1918-1919. After the War published three novels, "Schooling," "One, Two, Three," and "Private Life." Translated Karel Capek's "R.U.R.," "Letters from England," and many other works of Czech literature.

MR. BRIGGS had read stories about people who came into money, but not until the same thing happened to him did he realise how true to life the stories had been. Yes, it was exactly the same. One day, quite unexpectedly, a letter had arrived from a solicitor. It contained such words as "probate" and "legatee," and it had led to an interview with a bald-headed, clean-shaven, elderly gentleman who looked over his glasses and talked through his nose (quite a nice fellow, all the same, thought Mr. Briggs), amid a perfect warren of dingy offices in Bedford Row. The upshot of it all was that ■ the age of forty, Mr. Briggs, thanks to the freakish generosity of an unknown uncle in Australia, would be able to live in comfort for the rest of his life, without doing a stroke of work.

Mr. Briggs was cautious and he was therefore secretive. His was not what you would call an exuberant nature. Nor would you be altogether exuberant if, like Mr. Briggs, you had spent more than twenty years teaching in grubby little private schools up and down the country. Teaching anything and everything, from chemistry to physical drill, and from algebra to religious knowledge (actually, Mr. Briggs was very partial to religious knowledge, and could expound with particular gusto the Plagues of Egypt and the Parable of the Sower). Teaching, too, in return for about the same wage as a lower-grade dustman. He had drifted into it rather casually (as a matter of fact, it had practically been ■ toss up whether he did that or acted as a sort of understudy to an auctioneer's clerk).

It is true that, by what he couldn't help thinking, ■ the time,

was a great stroke of luck, he had managed, nearly five years earlier, to escape from the hades of private schools into the comparative purgatory of a day-school. What happened was that Mr. Spencer Smith, the headmaster of St. Christopher's High School for Boys, Kilburn, was obliged to dismiss one of his assistant masters under circumstances which had to be skilfully hushed up. Mr. Spencer Smith, who was rather good at this manoeuvre, accordingly hushed them up, and then informed Messrs. Wrickmansworth and Lapwing, the scholastic agents of Sackville Street, that he needed for the following term a good, all-round form-master, keen on games, must be communicant, with experience, and university graduate preferred, at a commencing salary of £130 per annum, non-resident. This really meant that Mr. Spencer Smith needed a docile drudge who, without asking questions, or otherwise demurring, would do any odd job which nobody else could be amicably induced to undertake. Messrs. Wrickmansworth and Lapwing thereupon circulated slips of smudgy green typescript announcing the requirements of Mr. Spencer Smith (in the official version, of course) to all the clients on their books (and they were many) who were likely to jump at the chance of serving Mr. Spencer Smith.

Among these was Mr. Briggs, who was specially attracted by the phrase "non-resident." Up till then, Mr. Briggs had "held resident posts," a scholastic process equivalent to the shop-assistant's "living-in," and, if continued long enough, suspiciously similar to "dying out." That, at least, was what Mr. Briggs thought about it. At that time he had a very resident, a too-resident post, in a small private school in one of the drearier regions of Essex. Now, oddly enough, the smaller a school is, the more it needs looking after. Mr. Briggs never seemed to be able to get away from this particular establishment with its forty-five pupils for more than half an hour at a time. And what pupils they were, too! Mr. Briggs, whose experience in this matter was by no means despicable, had never before encountered so high a percentage of boobies and hooligans among the young. The headmaster, who was very deaf and more than half blind, was not aware of this, and was under the strange impression that his school harboured nothing but young lambs. Mr. Briggs, on the other hand, whose faculties were still unimpaired, often felt that he was not so much a schoolmaster as a woefully-ineffective

superintendent of maniacs. Moreover, he was tired of weak tea, Irish stew and golden syrup, which formed the staple diet of the establishment. The Irish stew, in fact, he loathed with an almost fanatical loathing.

Thus it came about that the application which Mr. Spencer Smith received from Mr. Briggs fairly throbbed with an eagerness to convince and persuade. It may have been these vibrations which caused Mr. Spencer Smith to invite Mr. Briggs to an interview. It may also have been the fact that of all the candidates, Mr. Briggs was the nearest at hand, which meant that his allowance for travelling expenses would be small. At all events, invited he was, and Mr. Spencer Smith was most affable—far more affable, indeed, than he ever was afterwards.

Seated face to face in Mr. Spencer Smith's study, they went through his requirements seriatim. A good, all-round form-master? Well, Mr. Briggs thought that he could fairly lay claim to the description, seeing that, at one time and another, he had taught pretty well every subject on the curriculum. Keen on games? Mr. Briggs declared himself passionately devoted to football ("soccer" he called it), while as for cricket, the innings he had knocked up at Croodle House School in the Masters v. Old Boys Match, on which occasion he had carried his bat, constituted a local record. Communicant? Mr. Briggs smiled rather sadly, as if pained at the mere suggestion that he could be anything else. And so forth. Of course, Mr. Briggs had duly enumerated most of these details in his letter of application, and he had the impression that Mr. Spencer Smith was making sure that all the items tallied. And at a very early stage in their acquaintance, Mr. Briggs discovered that Mr. Spencer Smith was extremely fond of seeing whether things tallied.

This time they tallied fairly well. There was a slight hitch about Mr. Briggs's academic qualifications. With the pertinacity of the spider which had conveyed so profound a moral lesson to Robert Bruce, he had managed to pass Intermediate Arts (he preferred to call it "the first B.A."). Now Mr. Spencer Smith, it seemed, was really looking for a man with a degree. Still, he was prepared to compromise on this point, and in the end he proved delightfully accommodating. Suppose, he suggested, he were to offer Mr. Briggs the post, would Mr. Briggs be prepared to accept £110 per annum, on the understanding that, if and when

he obtained his degree, he would become entitled to the stipulated £130 ? Mr. Briggs was prepared to do so, and that was how he came to St. Christopher's High School for Boys.

On the occasion of that memorable interview, Mr. Briggs had worn his best suit, and Mr. Spencer Smith had been on his best behaviour. It was not long before the suit and the behaviour, both being of very shoddy material, had frayed badly, and Mr. Briggs began to wonder whether, after all, he was better off than before. There was no Irish stew, but there are worse things than Irish stew, and Mr. Spencer Smith was one of them. That, at any rate, was how Mr. Briggs looked at it. His prospects of a degree continued to recede like a mirage, until he decided that he had about as much chance of getting one as of becoming Prime Minister. Mr. Spencer Smith saw to that. Mr. Briggs used to arrive home every day with a brain like a soggy sponge, and even then there were piles of exercises for him to mark. He had two free periods per week, but as a rule Mr. Spencer Smith rendered them null and void by bringing him some little educational task, such as copying lists of boys whose tonsils needed attention, or who had qualified as entrants for the school swimming championship, or who were to be permitted to take part in the next paper-chase. And, to make matters worse, at odd moments, when the soul of Mr. Briggs was sick within him, he would drop nasty hints about the degree that was not forthcoming.

And so we come back to Mr. Briggs gloating over the prospect of lifelong freedom from the pinpricks and tantrums of Mr. Spencer Smith. That was perhaps only fit and proper. What was not so fit and proper, however, was the fact that Mr. Briggs was planning to take advantage of his good fortune to get "a little of his own back" (such was his own deplorable formula) from Mr. Spencer Smith. It may well be that, subconsciously at least, Mr. Briggs was preparing to settle accounts, not only with Mr. Spencer Smith, but also with his several predecessors for all the snubs, set-backs, and other forms of discomfiture which he had suffered at their hands, ever since, at the parting of the ways, he had espoused teaching and rejected auctioneering. But Mr. Spencer Smith was the only one of these gentlemen who was now at his mercy, and it was solely round the perky little figure of Mr. Spencer Smith that Mr. Briggs's plans for vengeance hovered. "Bally, bumptious, domineering little blighter" was how Mr.

Briggs put it to himself (this was as near as he ever approached to the Great Unprinted Adjectives and Nouns), "I'll show 'im."

Briefly, what Mr. Briggs proposed to do was to leave Mr. Spencer Smith professionally in the lurch for an hour or so, and then in the wake of the disturbance which this act would produce, to make a farewell speech such as no headmaster had ever yet heard from a subordinate. He had planned this with what he considered quite diabolical ingenuity. He had waited until the last month of the term just before the school began to simmer with the oncoming ferment of examinations and reports, and he had chosen a Thursday morning for his exploit. Why Thursday? Because he knew that nobody had a free period during the first hour, and so Mr. Spencer Smith himself would have to step into the breach. And the breach was, in this particular case, Form IVb, whom Mr. Briggs would normally be instructing in arithmetic. A peculiarly repellent job, since Form IVb comprised a set of juveniles whose inability to learn was equalled only by their loutish unwillingness to be taught. Mr. Briggs chuckled as he reviewed the probable course of events. At first there would be a low murmur in the classroom. Then, while the rest of the school settled down to work, the murmur would gradually swell to a hullabaloo, variegated with queer bumping noises and hoots and cat-calls, and what the Greek dramatist, in a different context, described as "untimely laughter." This would bring Mr. Spencer Smith on the scene. He would arrive from his study, where he had been perusing *The Daily Telegraph*, livid with fury, but by no means speechless. He would distribute vast impositions (no doubt among the least offensive of the revellers), and would threaten to thrash the ringleaders of the shindy, when their identity had been established by a kind of Star Chamber enquiry (in which Mr. Spencer Smith excelled). Next there would be a silent interlude, with Mr. Spencer Smith glaring terrifically at a very cowed IVb.

They would all be waiting on tenterhooks for him, Mr. Briggs. Presently, Mr. Spencer Smith's patience, such as it was, would come to an end, and at that juncture almost anything might happen. He might even take IVb in arithmetic. Well, if he did, Mr. Briggs wished him joy of it. He experienced a few highly-blissful moments as he pictured to himself Mr. Spencer Smith, his eye in a fine frenzy rolling, as he tried to teach IVb how to do

sums about leaky cisterns being filled by inadequate taps. But whatever happened, there could be no doubt that Mr. Spencer Smith was going to get the worst of it, especially when, at last, Mr. Briggs did arrive, unconcerned and nonchalant, and more especially, when, countering Mr. Spencer Smith's attempts to bully him, he began to bristle with a sublime effrontery. Mr. Briggs rehearsed a few repartees which, he felt sure, would annoy Mr. Spencer Smith very much indeed, and for the first time in his life he realised what was meant by the peace which passeth all understanding.

While he was indulging in these raptures, somebody tapped at the door, and his landlady popped her countenance into the room, a countenance which was roseate in the wrong places, and doughy in the others.

"You'll be late for school, Mr. Briggs," she observed in a tone which was two-thirds severity and one-third solicitude. "It's gorn nine."

"Thassallri, Mrs. Randall," he replied spacioisly through a mouthful of half-masticated bread and marmalade. "Quiallri." He picked up the newspaper to indicate that this was his last word on the subject, and Mrs. Randall's countenance withdrew, looking perplexed and also distinctly nettled.

The newspaper headlines were promising, and diverted Mr. Briggs' mind from his immediate preoccupations towards the outer world where big things were happening. "GIRL MURDERED IN EMPTY HOUSE" . . . "MINISTER HOWLED DOWN AT HUDDERSFIELD. . . "SMART SENTENCE ON CONFIDENCE TRICKSTER." . . . "CENTENARIAN'S HINTS ON DIET." Mr. Briggs was very fond of items like these. They were, as he put it, "newsy," and he proceeded to enjoy them. Then he began to ponder on things. Girls would continue to be murdered, ministers would continue to be howled down, confidence tricksters would continue to receive smart sentences, centenarians would continue to give hints on diet—and all for his benefit. Henceforward, he would have nothing else to do but to look on while people did things, especially those things the results of which were very awkward for them, but highly interesting to others. And this train of thought conveyed him gradually to a more detailed realisation of the benefits in store for him. They presented themselves to him in negative terms : No more hurrying over breakfast. No more

prayers. No more IVb. No more football. No more cricket. No more detention duty (Mr. Briggs reflected that men were awarded medals for exploits far less heroic than detention duty). No more terminal reports. And, above all, no more Spencer Smith.

Mr. Briggs looked at his watch, and decided that it was about time to make a move. He lit his pipe with the deliberation of a man who is about to perform a ticklish job, and went. In the passage he encountered Mrs. Randall. She seemed to be under the impression that Mr. Briggs was not right in his head, and had been lying in wait to see what he would be up to next.

"Better take yer umbrella, Mr. Briggs," she counselled him in a pointed manner which matched her owlish stare. "It looks like rain."

Mr. Briggs ignored this entirely. A fat lot he cared whether it rained or not.

Nevertheless, now that the distance between Mr. Spencer Smith and himself had begun to diminish, he became aware of slight qualms in the region of the midriff. It was the kind of feeling he had had when about to face an examination paper concerning some subject as Cicero's little tractate on friendship, with the contents of which he knew himself to be very imperfectly familiar. But this was only a passing phase. Before very long, when he had got well into his stride, and was stepping out with that somewhat flat-footed gait which had so often caused pupil to nudge pupil with irreverent and not always adequately concealed glee, Mr. Briggs not only managed to overcome his misgivings, but even went as far as to start elaborating his original scheme. Why stop at telling Mr. Spencer Smith properly off? (this, of course, is Mr. Briggs' phraseology, not mine). Why not go the whole hog, and leave things in an unholy mess? A baleful glare was kindled in Mr. Briggs' lack-lustre eye, and his long, sallow face almost lost its hang-dog expression as he glimpsed the delicious possibilities now within his reach. He saw himself tearing to tatters the most indispensable, the most irreplaceable documents—detention records, containing particulars of hundreds and hundreds of punishments, mark-books, in which the figures ran into thousands and thousands. The activities of St. Christopher's High School for Boys would be paralysed without them. Their loss would cause Mr. Spencer Smith to lash himself into a

titanic frenzy. Mr. Briggs tugged fiercely at his bedraggled moustache in a sudden and unwonted itch for destruction. But wiser and more gentlemanly counsels (again Mr. Briggs' phrase, not mine) soon prevailed. Come, come! What did the poet say? It is something—something to have a giant's strength, but it is thingumajig to use it like a giant. Mr. Briggs absorbed all the moral lesson possible from as much of this tag as he could remember, and he felt a better man for it. No, he was prepared to score off Mr. Spencer Smith, but to go beyond that wouldn't be playing the game. Mr. Briggs realised, as never before, what a nice nature he really had.

He was still basking in the pure joy which this discovery had caused him, when he came within sight of St. Christopher's High School for Boys. It was not so much a stately pile as an untidy heap, but these architectural shortcomings had never worried Mr. Briggs, and they were not likely to do so now. What did, however, take him aback was to be greeted by an uncanny silence, when there ought to have been at least a steady murmur. He had arrived nearly ten minutes before the end of the first lesson, and at this hour anyone approaching St. Christopher's from whatever direction would, unless he were stone deaf, hear the tangled symphony of education in progress, with all its undertones and overtones and brawls and whatnot. But Mr. Briggs, to his bewilderment and consternation, heard nothing. He reached the gate leading to the playground, and there he beheld a few boys, strangely abashed in their demeanour, being chivvied along by Sergeant Shadd.

Sergeant Shadd (the "sergeant" was a courtesy title, as he had retired from His Majesty's forces with the rank of corporal) was the drill-instructor at St. Christopher's. He also acted as caretaker, and performed mysterious duties in the stokehold, together with a certain amount of scavenging or superintendence of scavenging. He was a wiry little man with freckles, a spiked, ginger moustache and a peak-cap, asserting his authority largely by means of a stout bunch of keys which he was apt to brandish, like an insignia, menacingly in front of him, and, if need be, to apply smartly to the rumps of transgressors. His voice was permanently hoarse as the result of bellowing many martial orders and quaffing many alcoholic beverages.

"'Ere, come along, you boys," he wheezed, "it's 'igh time you

'opped it. I got something else to do besides 'anging about 'ere all day, looking after you."

The boys slunk off, sheepishly raising their caps to Mr. Briggs. Mr. Briggs approached the atmosphere of stale shag which accompanied Sergeant Shadd's comings and goings.

"Got a holiday, or something?" he enquired, assuming an off-hand tone.

Sergeant Shadd looked thunderstruck and also rather shocked.

"A 'oliday? A 'oliday, sir?" he gasped with a hint of reproof.

"Why, what's up? Anything wrong?"

"Wrong, sir? You don't mean to say you ain't 'eard?"

Mr. Briggs' embarrassment became more evident.

"Well, as a matter of fact," he began hesitantly. "I overslept myself this morning."

He grinned vacantly.

"Overslep' yourself, did yer?"

Sergeant Shadd pushed his peak-cap above his pinkish brow and scratched his head, contemplating Mr. Briggs quizzically, as he were a recruit on parade who had committed some vast blunder against military etiquette. "Then it ain't surprising you ain't 'eard."

"Heard what?" Mr. Briggs was beginning to feel testy.

"Well, sir," began Sergeant Shadd deliberately, as if selecting with exquisite care the proper phraseology for imparting his unique titbit of news. "It's like this 'ere. Mr. Spencer Smith, sir, 'e was crossing the road this morning, and a young chap on a motor-bike buzzed round that there corner at a feeble rate—coo, a good forty mile an hour, I reckon it was—and Mr. Spencer Smith, 'e just stepped orf the kerb, and——"

"You don't mean to say he——"

"Went plunk into 'im. 'E never 'ad a chance to dodge or anything. Plunk into 'im," repeated Sergeant Shadd with zest.

"Was he badly injured?" asked Mr. Briggs, feeling that he would get at the truth only by direct enquiry.

"Injured? *Injured?*" Sergeant Shadd uttered a noise to express petulance at such a ridiculous question. "Why, it was a 'opeless case. 'Opeless. They took 'im orf to the 'ospital, but 'e pegged out before they got 'im there."

"Then he's dead?" Mr. Briggs could not associate Mr.

Spencer Smith with the idea of death. It was like hearing that the Marble Arch had passed away.

"I should think 'e blooming well is. That's why the school was dismissed for the day," declared Sergeant Shadd, with perhaps just a trifle more hearty emphasis than the occasion altogether demanded. "Why, sir, 'e 'ad a ruptured liver, and 'is stummick was all smashed, and——"

He lusciously enumerated further anatomical disasters, and concluded :

"I bet that young chap won't 'arf cop out. And serve 'im bally well right. These 'ere motor-bikes never ought to be allowed, that they never. Up and down that blooming road all day *and* all night. A pack of saucy young whippersnappers, showing orf, with their gels 'anging on be'ind."

He mused blackly on this spectacle of decadent youth, and then expectorated with the unpretentious neatness of the British N.C.O.

Mr. Briggs stared. It was only a trivial act, but it had symbolical significance. Never during the lifetime of Mr. Spencer Smith would Sergeant Shadd have dared to expectorate on the playground of St. Christopher's.

Mr. Briggs caught Sergeant Shadd's red-rimmed, watery little eye, and they exchanged glances of mutual comprehension, although it was probable that Mr. Briggs read Sergeant Shadd's thoughts more accurately than Sergeant Shadd read his. But they both understood that, as Mr. Spencer Smith was no more, they could allow themselves a greater latitude than of old. And Mr. Briggs, matching Sergeant Shadd's act of emancipation by an analogous freedom of speech, exclaimed :

"Well, I'm blowed !"

## THE HORSE THIEF

By HANNAH BERMAN

Hannah Berman, born 1890, in the Province of Kovno, Lithuania, brought to Ireland at the age of three. First writings short articles in Dublin general Press, and London Jewish Periodicals. "Stempenyu," from the Yiddish of Shalom Aleichem published 1913. "Melutovna" (a novel of Russian-Jewish life), 1913; "Jewish Children," from the Yiddish of Shalom Aleichem, 1920; "Anthills" (a novel of Russian-Jewish life), 1926. Many stories, articles and translations in Jewish and general Press in London, New York, etc. Yiddish contributions in London and Kovno periodicals.

EVERYBODY had something, but I had nothing; and, having nothing, I was nothing. And, who is there likes to be nothing? Nobody. So, I decided within myself that I must have something; and, thereby, come to be something myself. And I went and asked myself: "What thing is of the greatest value?" The answer was: "A horse." For, since ever I can remember, the wealthy Shalom Asher used to boast, not of his fine house, not of his wife's jewels, not of his daughter's fashionable clothes, but of his prancing horses. They were like lions, just as he said. They pranced and stamped and snorted their way through the village, whilst Shalom Asher himself sat up on the box-seat of the high waggon, like a lord, his nose in the air, his thick black beard floating apart in the wind, and his two soft strong white hands gripping the reins like bands of steel.

So my inevitable conclusion was that a horse was the most valuable thing in the world. To own a horse meant that one was wealthy and powerful and all-important. Even the tiniest child understands that he must scamper quickly out of the way of a prancing horse.

But how was a beggar like myself to come by a horse?

And why should I not cease to be a beggar, once and for always?

■ it a pleasure to go about footsore and weary and hungry, dragging one's body miserably from hamlet to hamlet, collecting

odds and ends—rags, bits of iron, old bottles, bones and rabbit-skins ?

True, I could look upon myself then as an honest man ; and everybody says that honesty is the greatest virtue in the world.

But I don't know ; really and truly, I don't know.

If the rogue does get whipped with white-hot rods of iron in the other world, at any rate he has sound shoes and a dry coat and good food and a prancing horse in this world.

Is a feather bed nothing ?

Is a fine house nothing ?

Are honour and respect in this world nothing ?

So I made up my mind that I would come by a horse somehow or other, let who would be honest and wait for his reward in the world to come.

A horse was what I wanted.

Besides, why should the rich folks have everything and I nothing ? They can afford to lose something ; that is to say, have it stolen from them.

And, really, what is stealing ?

'To-day I am rich—have everything. To-morrow the wheel of fortune turns round, and I am poor—have nothing. Who knows what the wheel of fortune is ? Perhaps it is a sort of thief whom no one has ever seen, and certainly, no one has ever caught.

So, thinking this and thinking that, I finally made up my mind, and strengthened my heart, and, one dark night, after many shocks and hesitations and turnings-away from the stable—the Most High came to my aid at last, and I got away with one of Shalom Asher's prancing horses, bridle and all. I flung an old sack over him for a saddle, and I said to him, in the lofty voice of Shalom Asher himself : " Hi, carcase, get along with you ! " And I rode off out of the village, not like a thief but like a prince.

I came to the big town just as a fair was starting.

The dealers saw at once that I had a " lion," not a horse. They said to me : " Et ! He is so-so. But, we will give you fifty *roubles* for him, not because he is worth all that, but because we want him just now. He will match the other two horses of the steward's *troika*." But I was not to be taken in with dealers' talk. In any case, I did not want to sell the horse. So I rode up and down the market place with my nose in the air. I heard the

people say : " A beggar on horseback, as I live, a beggar on horseback."

Well, let them say what they like. Let them burst talking. They would not make any comments at all if I were on foot.

By and by, my " lion " began to get hungry. I rode him out of the town ; and led him to graze by the side of the road. Where was I, a penniless beggar, to get oats for him ? My fine fellow sniffed and tossed his head haughtily. Of course the dusty stubble was not good enough for him.

" You are like me," said I to him. " I too, want juicy meat. But when I can't get it I content myself with dry crusts. Eat or go hungry, as you will. You are not now a rich man's horse."

The devil was proud as Shalom Asher himself. He would not eat.

Well, I have a horse. I have ridden him in public, and have become a somebody to the gaping crowds. But what to do next I do not know.

A waggon is out of the question. If it were possible to get one, I should be a great pedlar, a sort of merchant, honoured and respected by the peasants, and looked up to by my neighbours, the poor wandering bag-men. But what is the use in crying for the moon ?

The thing is : What next ? The fair is over, and there will not be another for five days. The next market-town is twelve *versts* off. Go and look for fairs every day of the week !

Well, anyway, I have a fine horse, and I ride and ride and ride, in and out of the towns and villages, like a prince visiting his dominions. Yes, but a prince ultimately returns to his castle. The bowing and the cheering and the flattery of his serfs are not enough for always. He goes home, stretches his limbs, calls his servants, and eats and drinks, and drinks and eats.

With me it is different. Just because I have a horse, and just because I can look down with contempt upon the gaping villagers, I am a homeless wanderer. Nowhere is there rest or peace, or food or drink waiting for me.

It is true I might sell my fine horse, and in his place buy for myself a half-dead nag and a ramshackle waggon. But, what good would they be to me ? If I had been content to drag myself about from place to place, I should have had no need for a horse which one must feed, nor for a ramshackle waggon which one

must tie up with strings every step of the way. And for a horse and waggon one needs merchandise. Eh ! There's no use in talking. Even the few *kopecs* I had have already gone for bread. And my horse ■ daily growing less and less of a personage, so to say. He now eats the wayside grass, but not yet with the whole of his mouth, merely with the half of it. His coat has lost its gloss ; his mane is ragged ; his hide shaggy. His nostrils have no fire in them. He ■ not a " lion " any more. Even his late master, Shalom Asher himself, would find it impossible to pick out his one-time " lion " from a crowd of pedlars' nags.

And, wonder upon wonder, to me he is not any more the source of pride I thought he would turn out to be. Even if he still were the prancing charger of Shalom Asher's stable, he would be nothing more than he is—a creature that demands food. He is a burden, a vexation, I might almost say, a visitation upon me for my sins.

Every day, every hour, we both grow more ragged, and more unkempt, and more forlorn. The people are not amazed now, when they see us. What is there to be amazed at—a ragged beggar astride a bony nag with its head lowered ?

Miles and miles I have covered, now astride him, now walking beside him, the rope end on my almost bare shoulder. Am I more tired of wandering or of dragging the worn-out horse after me ? Really and truly, I do not know.

But this I do know : that a horse is no use to a poor man. He is merely another mouth to feed. And besides, one has to drag him about with one wherever one goes, and shelter him, and care for him.

I have come to that point when everything I thought right now appears to me to be the other way about. I am beginning to see that just having one thing, whether it is a horse or a house, or a good pair of shoes, does not make one a somebody. One has to have many things. Along with a horse, one has to have a waggon ; and with the waggon a stable ; and with the stable a house ; and with the house a business ; and with the business ■ position ; and credit, and a good name, and a wife bedecked with jewels, and a fashionable daughter, and a son at the university. A horse alone is not enough.

I doubt if the rich man, Shalom Asher, has been ruined by the loss of his horse ; but it is true that I have been beggared for ever

by having stolen ■ ; for I can never again appear in my native village ; and where to lay my head I do not know.

Really, the thief who steals a horse deserves the whipping with iron rods which awaits him in the other world. In fact, he ought to be whipped with rods of iron in this world too. He is a mad fool ; for, he goes and ties blinkers on his own eyes, and then wonders why he stumbles into ditches and breaks his neck.

■ a man does steal a horse, he should do it not for the sake of pride, but simply and solely to make money. Pride needs more than a horse to support it.

This is the conclusion I have come to ; and there is no other in the world.

But what to do I cannot think. For my horse is nothing but skin and bone ; and it is now a question of either dragging him on my back to the fair, or sleeping in the ditch, and eating the same dusty grass that he eats.

Really a horse is not a five-*kopeck* piece with a hole in it, which some folks will take and some will not.

You can ask Shalom Asher, or you can ask me. We will both tell you the same.

## CINDERELLA'S SISTER

By G. B. STERN

Gladys Bronwyn Stern, born London, 1890. Educated Notting Hill High School. One of the leading English novelists and creator of the Rakonitz Saga. Commenced writing plays and verse at the age of eight and her first novel was written in her twentieth year. She is President of the Femina Vie Heureuse and Northcliffe Prizes Committee. Publications : "Pantomime," 1914 ; "Back Seat," 1923 ; "Smoke Rings," 1923 ; "Tents of Israel," 1924 ; "Thunderstorm," 1925 ; "A Deputy was King," 1926 ; "Jack a Manory," 1928 ; "Petruchio," 1929 ; "Mosaic," 1930 ; "The Shortest Night," 1931 ; "Little Red Horses," 1932 ; "The Rakonitz Omnibus," 1932. Plays : "The Matriarch," 1929 ; "Debonair," 1930 ; "The Man who Pays the Piper," 1931.

WHEREVER three sisters grow together, our memory of fairy tale expects one, the youngest, to be beautiful, modest, gifted, charming and forlorn ; the other two, haughty and selfish and with no merits to attract the inevitable prince.

But in the case of Essie, Dorothy and Violet Lake, fairytale becomes a confusion. For Essie, the eldest, was forlorn without being beautiful ; Dorothy, neither forlorn nor modest, was undoubtedly the prettiest, the gayest and most selfish of the trio ; and Vi, a flapper still at school, was just a sharp kid, all eyes and red pigtail.

They lived in the rooms above what had once been their father's shop, in a busy thoroughfare of one of London's suburbs. Matthew Lake was a prosperous tobacconist ; and when he died, his neighbour, old Weatherly, the stationer, paid the daughters quite a comfortable sum for the goodwill of the business, and begged them to remain in the rooms above the shop as his tenants. "I'm going to put my boy Dick in here, see, and let him run it for himself ; but he'll keep on living with me and his ma next door, just the same."

It followed that they saw quite a lot of Dick ; especially Essie, who looked after the house while Vi was at school ; and Dorothy,

working at Messrs. Hollingbourne and Fripp, the fashionable West End drapers. "Work?" Essie commented often, with a twang of elder-sister bitterness; "some people seem to think that everything done out of the house is work, and nothing that's done in it. I wish you had my job for a bit. Work? Pulling silk stockings over your hand to show a customer the clocks, once every half-hour, and the rest of the time all your dolled-up heads together bragging about your boys and what a time you'll have later in the evening, and——"

But Dorothy only laughed, tugged a floppy black velvet tammy lower over her bright fair curls, and surveyed with satisfaction the mirror's reflection of demure, irresistible nose and mouth.

"Anyone'd think you weren't the lady of the three of us, to hear you grumble!"

"Yes, a life like a queen, haven't I? hearing you say, 'I'm going out, don't bother to wait up for me!' night after night. It's poor fun having a sister who lives only for pleasure and dancing and green beads round her neck——"

"Look nice, don't they? Present for a good girl from yours truly, herself. But you wouldn't be bad-looking, Essie old thing, if you didn't scrape back your hair out of spite to your own face, the way you do. Why don't you bob it?" Dorothy genuinely meant to be encouraging, though privately she thought Essie was a fairly hopeless case. Essie Lake had a long, long plain face; the route from her nose to the upper lip seemed interminable. Her figure was beautiful, certainly, but as Dorothy put it, with more flippancy than tact: "The eye of the beholder doesn't get as far, if it starts from the top, so it's not much good to her!"

Essie said, in reply to the bobbing suggestion: "Some people prefer it as it is, thanks!"

"Essie!"—for a sudden happiness, too touching to be censured for its complacency, had betrayed itself in the older girl's voice; and Dorothy, startled, swung round from her mirror, and with hands outspread along the dressing-table behind her, tilting herself slowly backwards, she rapidly put Essie through a cross-examination:

"You've got a fellow?"

"Yes, you have. When did he take a fancy to you? Has he

come to the scratch yet? Don't tell me he likes you in that fussy old purple dress of yours? Why you can't wear jumpers like sensible folk—Never mind, don't matter—I'll see to you now . . . when I've an hour to spare. I've got to be off now. Good luck, old thing, and I hope you'll have a livelier evening than what I'm going to, and don't, for heaven's sake, fill him up with the usual dither about your duty to your motherless little sisters. I'm all right, bless you. I could have a dozen husbands if I wanted, now, right away, and change them for another dozen at the end of the month if they don't wear well, so——"

"How you rush on, Dorothy!" But it was easy to see that this sort of talk was as voluptuously sweet to Essie, who had never yet in all her drab twenty-nine years, been chaffed about a lover, as the touch of caressing fingers to a cat. Oh! the subtle flattery of being talked to by Dorothy as an equal in the realms of captivity. "Who's your victim to-night?" she asked playfully fumbling for an easy give-and-take in love-chat, that she imagined went on among the young ladies in the silk-stockings department of Messrs. Hollingbourne and Fripp. "It's a shame to flirt the way you do."

"Only young Dick from downstairs. First time he's honoured me. He always looks as though he was in another place from where he is. Dick-o'-Dreams, I call him. But I've let myself in for it. . . . 'Night, Essie!"

Essie sat quite still, watching her happiness being dragged away from under her as a cold ebb-tide sucks pebbles down the beach.

"Only young Dick from downstairs——"

Dick Weatherly hated being a tobacconist. He was one of those broad-shouldered creatures with thoughtful, deep-set eyes and a craggy chin, whom one sees instinctively in a shirt open at the neck, and earth-caked breeches, driving a plough against the skyline. And this, indeed, was Dick's ambition. He hated towns and pavements and the stuffy smell of rooms; he hated the neighbourly huddle of houses. He ached for the strong rank odour of burning weeds, for the sight of shining dewberries and old-man's-beard and brown autumn leaves, all tangled up into a hedge against an October sky vividly, flamingly blue. He was sick to use his strength like a man, instead of tendering change over a counter; to blister his palms against the rough handle of his spade, driving it deep into the stubborn earth.

" Bless the boy ! " thus Mrs. Weatherly, aghast at such low ambitions, " does he think me and the dad 'ud let him go away and be a common farm-labourer ? "

So Dick, craving sympathy, went to Essie with his longings. And she thought he talked to her because she was a woman, not guessing that to him she was merely a listener. Neither of them idealists, it was the practical side of country life which appealed to them ; and they started a foolish joyous pretence that they were brother and sister buying a farm and stock and implements, mapping out their days from season to season. Each field's changing crop of their unreal farm was real to Essie, dear and familiar ; at last, at last it had come to her, after the dried-up painful time of waiting, that which other girls, the Dorothys of the world, attain and reject so lightly ; at last a man needed her. Essie was in heaven. . . .

And now—he had asked Dorothy to go out with him.

" But it'll be only this once," Essie comforted herself, though her lips were drawn tight with dread ; " she's pretty, of course, and he can't help seeing it, but she's all for pleasure ; cinemas, and a crowd, and the streets lighted up, and presents—why, she fairly eats up presents. She doesn't care for the things *he* cares about. Him and me. They'll get fed up with each other in no time, and then she'll be on again with Archie Stephens or Harold—there, I've forgotten his name. And no wonder with so many ! "

So many. Dorothy had so many. Pert, saucy, golden-haired Dorothy, her favourite velvet tammy jauntily tossed—but Essie could have slain her then.

Fairy tale again. Dick's godfather—can your fancy picture his pointed wizard's hat, his gnarled kindly old face ?—died, and left him—a fortune ? No. An alchemist's priceless secret ? No. Well—a farm then ? Yes. A small farm, nine miles from the nearest station, three-and-a half miles over fields from the village of Combe Hollow, where there was one general shop.

" Will you be able to bear it, darling, darling ? "

" Can but try. If it's too awful at Mudpie-on-the Flats or whatever you call your priceless legacy, I'll leave a polite note for you, and hop it, and that's that ! "

Dick was satisfied. But his mother and father and sister, and

best pal and old friend of the family and sister's husband and late godfather's lawyer, and all the rest of the company to whom he proudly presented his wife to be, seemed less sure of the wisdom of his choice. "■ you'd asked me——" they said singly and in chorus.

"But I didn't!" sturdily from Dick.

Dorothy on a farm! The notion was preposterous. Dorothy, who wore high heels, and powdered her impertinent little nose in defiance of all beholders; Dorothy who spent her spare money on flimsy nightgowns and dainty, bright-hued crepe-de-chine jumpers, mauve and blue, and occasionally—when she was wisest—black. Dorothy was a flirt. Dorothy hated being bored. Dorothy's bliss was a lilting musical comedy accompanied by a three tiered box of fat cream chocolates to eat. Dorothy was frightened of pain, knew nothing of illness, and less of domestic and kitchen matters. Dorothy was capable of saying; "Fancy! Does it?" when you pointed her out a cow and explained that it was the animal which gave us mutton. "Fancy! Does it?" . . . So Percy Cox, Dick's brother-in-law, facetiously burlesqued her manner.

"A nice helpful young woman like her sister Essie was no good to your lordship, I suppose," said Mr. Weatherly tauntingly; for he resented the delight with which Dick had abandoned the tobacconist's shop to Percy.

"I suppose you imagine Miss Dorothy, of Oxford Street, will be down before cockcrow, making butter?"

"Ten o'clock's more in her line, I should say."

"I could not help noticing," remarked Mr. Parker, the solicitor, who had brought the good news of Dick's legacy, "that Miss-er-Lake, is it?" with a deprecating cough. "Ah—a very charming and—ah—high-spirited young lady; but I could not help noticing that her appearance was delicate, and unfit for the strenuous life on a farm."

"Oh, she'll simply run away and leave you after six months, my boy, simply bored to tears!" was Percy's final prophecy, offered with a waggish shake of the head.

But Dick hardly heard them, save as faraway and unimportant mutterings beyond the golden edge of his horizon . . . He was in a state of rapt ecstasy; a farm of his own—and Dorothy! Dorothy—and a farm! Through the ugly rumble of street traffic, his ear was already listening to enchanted sounds of cows peacefully

munching their meal of wet fresh grass ; the soft shuffle and patter of sheep along the road ; dry rustle of wind through the barley ; children barefooted, bare-headed, brown laughing children, clambering over the plank bridge of the stream which bordered the home meadows.

*His cows ! his grass ! his sheep ! his barley ! his . . .*

Certainly Dick was outrageously happy.

Meanwhile Dorothy had to hear very much the same disapprobations and warnings of future disaster from her special circle of friends :

" What I mean to say, my dear, that of course he's very good-looking, not so posh as Archie Stevens though !—and it's always on the safe side to marry a man of property, and yet——"

" Oh, do heave it off your chest instead of grunting and sighing round me like a pig with bronchitis ! " cried Dorothy impatiently, and not so lost to earthly censure as Dick in his rosy mists.

" What I mean is, that with your complexion and so on it seems a shame to bury yourself in mud where no one's ever going to see you or care about the fashion, or how you put your hat on. What I mean is, Doth, old girl, that you've got a way with you, and might have married a gentleman and had a house in town, and all our gay times could have gone on just the same. Down in old Stick-in-the-holeshire there won't be no theatres, not even the pictures, no 'bus-rides all of us together, nor teas on the river when it's fine. Mark my words, you'll get hipped to death."

" Well there's not much sense in reading the burial service before I even start, is there ? "

She did not mind what May Clarke said ; May was a pal, and was really horrified at the prospect of a future for her which held no dancing, no gossip, no street-lamps bright against a soggy sky, and fun, and gay voices singing in chorus, and shop windows, and posters on the wall, and picture papers, and the endless thrill of lovemaking . . . Would life be quite unendurable without them, Dorothy wondered, on the eve of her wedding, curled up like a kitten on the motley patchwork quilt of the big bed she shared with Essie ; and waiting for the latter to come up from elaborate preparations in the kitchen. Sharing with Essie had not been a comfortable business ever since the simultaneous announcement of Dick's legacy and the engagement . . . Dorothy guessed well enough the cause of Essie's sunken eyes and pallor and added

harshness of voice ; guessed that she had got herself " worked up for nothing " by Dick's long friendly talks with her, in the early days when he was still too proudly shy to follow his fancy for the brilliant little butterfly soft-winged sister ; too uncertain of the depth of her feelings for the other young men who swarmed around her in stages of hopeless adoration barely hidden by their chaff and teasing compliments.

" Your sister Essie's been frightfully decent to me, letting me ramble on for hours about farms and the country when I thought there was no earthly chance I'd ever get either. She must come and stay with us——"

Dorothy did not enlighten him. Experience had taught her that most men believed, in all childlike faith that plain girls were passionless in fair and logical proportion to their plainness.

But Essie was suffering—" She's never had a boy of her own," reflected Dorothy, gazing with perplexed eyes at the tumble of her trousseau which strewn floor and chairs and dressing table, and even frothed about around her on the bed. " No, never once, that I can remember. It must make a difference to anyone's temper. And if she began to build on Dick as a last chance . . . All the same, I don't see she need visit it on me. If I was a girl in a book I'd sacrifice myself—send him about his business without saying why, and bye-and-bye he'd drift round to Essie, thinking I didn't care . . . But I dunno ; there doesn't seem much sense in that sort of goings-on out of books. After all, it's me he cares for, and I don't suppose he'd marry Essie even if I did chuck him, and then there'd be three of us with the hump instead of one. Not fair on Dick, either to lump him in as part of being noble, whether he wants to be or not. But I expect"—wise-eyed, she twisted her fingers in and out of the soft blue silk of a chemise lying close to her hand—" I expect it makes it worse for her by a long chalk that it should be just me he's keen on, if it can't be her ; just me, and not a stranger. Wonder if she's going to speak to me any more decent to-night when she comes up, considering that to-morrow——"

Her bride's radiance was dimmed to unusual wistfulness. She could have relied on her mother being " decent "—by which she meant being tender—on the eve of her wedding. But her mother was long since dead—and it was natural for Essie to be bitter—and Vi was a kid and didn't count—and May Clarke and Dick's mother were both croakers ; Dorothy hated croaking.

She wanted to hear someone say with gay confidence, "Good-night, darling! I *know* you're going to be happy!"

Essie dragged into the room. Her expression was forbidding, and Dorothy was at once on guard, soft and yet wary, like a cat with its ears laid back.

"Time you were packed. There'll be enough to do to-morrow without that," Essie opened the trunk which stood at the foot of the bed, and in a business-like fashion began to fold and lay away in it the dainty confusion of clothes on which Dorothy had squandered her earnings, week after week, and, in a final reckless burst, forty pounds of the capital her father had left in equal shares to the three girls.

"Much good these'll be on a farm. Ninon jumpers, and three evening frocks, and nightgowns I could squash up into one hand! Just the right thing for cleaning out the cow-shed! I can see you wearing 'em."

"I don't clean out cow-sheds wearing a nightgown, do I?" Dorothy laughed at the point she had scored. Too lazy to pack for herself, she yet hated seeing Essie's unloving hands plunged among the pretty flimsy fabrics that Dick should presently worship her in. "Besides, he's not likely a bit to let me do rough work like that."

Her inflexion of proud security in that last sentence, innocent though she had been of it, proved too much for the elder sister. She slammed down the lid of the trunk, and stood upright, glaring over the iron foot-rail of the bed.

"There's something you ought to know."

"Fire away, then," Dorothy clasped her hands behind her head, burying them warmly in the loose tangle of her golden curls.

"Dick—you think he loves you—and he does in a way, a man's way—that's to say, he's infatuated over your baby mouth and blue eyes and dimples. It lasts about a month—that sort of love. Like an illness it is with them. But . . . it was me all along he really wanted. Me, not you. He used to talk to me for hours, making plans . . . about our home together in the country. You can ask him. It's true. Though he never thought there was a chance then. And just when it might have come true for us, there was you butting in, like you always butt in, because you hadn't fellows enough already paying you silly compliments. He's not your sort,

and I don't know why you wanted him, unless, likely enough, it was just to spite me."

"If that's what you think," Dorothy broke in, her limbs still indolently cuddled into the hollow of the quilt, but with a wide-awake angry sparkle in her eyes, "then we needn't bother to have anything more to do with each other ever. If *that's* why you think I'm marrying Dick. And I shan't look out for you at Combe Hollow."

"As though I'd visit you there. My home. That you cheated me of. But I shall know, a little later on, how he'll be sorry and sorrier; how he'll be wanting me, remembering our plannings, wishing it was me in your place, every minute of his life. He'll want a woman who can help him and stand by him in the rough times and be sensible and enjoy hard work . . . a wife instead of a doll! Yes, smile; but it's me that'll smile to think of you stumbling about on your high heels, and hating the country when the winter comes and there's nothing to do—nothing for *you* to do. I should find plenty. But you're for the town and pleasures and little use for anything else. You'll be miserable and he'll be miserable . . . wanting me instead of you. And I—I'm glad of it!"

And Essie marched stiffly out of the room, fearing to spoil the effect of her speech by a burst of hysterical tears. But she felt she could bear the dragging horror of to-morrow's festivities better now that she had unburdened herself. Establishing in speech what was still more a fierce desire than a serene confidence, that Dick would regret his choice, had helped to establish it in her own mind as a fact. If she could only get over the next few months! for that much happiness was bound to be theirs before the prophesied disillusion; if she could only blot out from her mind the provocative vision of Dorothy held firmly in his arms, Dorothy being spoilt and petted, Dorothy queening it with her childish imperious ways, irresistible to manhood's strength; Dorothy curving her lips to the shape of a kiss; Dorothy bloomed with delicious drowsiness; Dorothy possessive, eager for the new life . . .

"It can't last! It can't last! In six months——"

When she had calmed herself sufficiently to return to the room, Dorothy was tranquilly asleep, her lips faintly smiling . . . Essie read a taunt into the smile.

The sharp anguish of the wedding was over ; and Essie moved away, with Vi, from the rooms in which they had all three been born, and where her mother and father had died. She could not endure them ; they were no longer home—only the place where the marriage of Dorothy with Dick Weatherly had been jovially celebrated. Essie waited, her mind down at Combe Hollow, picturing Dorothy happy . . . a little later, Dorothy struggling, grumbling, pining for town . . . and later still, Dick beginning to tire of her frivolity and her incompetence, and to wish he had chosen the woman who understood him, instead of her younger sister . . . Four months, five months, six months—Essie was looking happier now ; with her thin cheeks flushed to a soft pink ; her mouth less drawn ; her eyes dreamy ; she lived mechanically on the shores of every-day, but her spirit was as detached from real life as an island. . . .

But restlessness came back in feverish spurts ; she craved for reassurance. If only her dream could be sealed to certainty ! She was not exacting of fortune, asking no more than the secret knowledge that Dick was lonely too ; and, without her, incomplete. Like mild sunshine warming her from afar, would have been such a union. But how could she rest while in doubt ? Supposing her intuition were wrong ? Supposing that after all Dorothy was his passion and his mate ? “ Oh, no—no—never ! ” —yet it was torture not to be *sure*.

Perhaps, in the old fairy tale of Cinderella, the Ugly Sister may have been more to be pitied than the pretty plaintive heroine who so easily wins our hearts. Perhaps the Ugly Sister loved Prince Charming—the desperate way she hacked at her toes with the carving knife so as to force her foot into the slipper, points that way. Perhaps, in her spinsterhood, she pined for him long after that fascinating, little glass-slippered minx of a sister had charmed him to the altar. . . .

Though it was impossible for Essie to see Dorothy again, or write to her, after their final bitter quarrel on the eve of the wedding, yet there was no reason why Vi also should be cut off from Combe Hollow. The Christmas holidays were at hand. Vi was looking pale ; country air was what she wanted . . .

“ Why doesn't Doth invite me down to Combe Hollow ? I'd love to stay on a farm instead of dragging about here. Mayn't I write, Essie, and ask if she'll have me ? ”

A cordial invitation was the result of the appeal. And . . .

"Vi will tell me when she comes back!" Vi had a smart tongue and quick, shrewd eyes, for her fifteen years. She would soon notice any signs of strife or discontent at the farm. . . .

If Essie never saw Dick again for the rest of her life, she would be happy—now.

Vi had come back, her fallow little face rosier and less pointed than of yore; her eyes not so unnaturally big; apparently Combe Hollow had agreed with her.

"And Doth *looks* all right too—jolly fit, in fact. But——"

"But what?" Essie was obliged to sit down suddenly, her knees were shaking so.

"She told me not to tell you," Vi blurted out.

"Don't they get on well, then, she and Dick? I'm sorry about that," casually.

It transpired that Dorothy was to the last degree discontented and bored—sick for town; that she was irritable with Dick when he tried to caress her; that she asked Vi all sorts of longing questions about picture palaces and motorbuses and her old shop cronies; that she abused the farm and the animals and the endless mud and the dreary crops, and the long evenings without laughter; that she hinted darkly that she was "fed up" and "not going to stand it long." Finally she appealed to her sister not to inform Essie that the marriage was a failure: "Tell her that it's all glorious and that Dick's still mad about me," defiantly.

"Isn't he then?" Vi had queried sharply.

And Dorothy had just walked away without answering.

Dorothy was not so bright as she once had been, Essie reflected, to have trusted the kid not to betray her; for Vi had always preferred Essie, of her two sisters.

"Did he seem unhappy—Dick, I mean?"

"Didn't see him much. He was always out, digging or something. But he seemed sort of puzzled."

Perplexity, yes—and then disillusion—and then anger at disillusion, and regret, bitter, bitter regret. . . .

But ■ was Essie's hour of ecstasy. She had been right, and she need not kill her dream. If she lived thirty or forty or even fifty years more, she would never ask more than just this.

Dorothy was only human, and as she stood in the doorway of Combe Hollow, watching her husband stride across the frozen fields towards home and fire and tea—and her arms, she was rather wistfully conscious that it would have been nice to have flaunted her radiant happiness in Essie's face, even by proxy. By now Vi would have reported all the carefully worked-up atmosphere of wretchedness, and Essie was sending triumphant mental "I-told-you-so's" by the hundred in the one direction of Combe Hollow.

No matter—it was only a small thing compared with . . . Oh, the daily glory of Dick's return, tired from work, with the red balloon of the sun sinking behind the brown fields at his back. How she, town sparrow as she was, had learnt to love those same fields !

Dear old Dick—he had been so perplexed at her unwonted behaviour during the fortnight that the little sister was with them. Dorothy had not explained to him the reason why—"Men are so slow on the uptake, bless their little hearts !" Now that Vi had gone, she could make it up to him.

"Essie'll never come down here to see for herself . . . and I'm so happy, I can afford to give her that much ! "

## WHY ADONIS LAUGHED

By SARAH GERTRUDE MILLIN

Sarah Gertrude Millin, born 1892, in Lithuania. Went to South Africa with parents at age of six months. Perhaps the most important woman writing to-day in English literature, and one of the greatest writers of our time. Married Philip Millin, K.C., in 1912. Commenced to write at early age in South African periodicals. Her first novel, published in 1920, "The Dark River" was followed by "Middle Class," 1921; "Adam's Rest," 1922; "The Jordans," 1923; "God's Stepchildren," 1924; "Mary Glenn," 1925; "An Artist in the Family," 1927; "The Coming of the Lord," 1928; "The Fiddler," 1929; "Men on a Voyage," 1930; "The Sons of Mrs. Aab," 1931; "Rhodes: A life," 1933.

### I

DOWN at the Vaal River Farm where we sometimes go to ease our hearts of the strain of living in Johannesburg, six thousand feet above the sea-level, Adonis, a graceful but very dirty young Kaffir, was languidly drawing water from the well. As David, another farm boy, passed, Adonis began suddenly to laugh. David walked on without looking round. No word was spoken either side, but the loud and persistent laughter of Adonis followed David right up to the house.

I called to Alita, our native cook, who had come with us from Johannesburg. She was standing at the garden wall conversing with some friends in a Kaffir dialect I did not understand. I judged from the sound of her voice that she was very angry about something. She threw a last indignant sentence at them as she answered my summons.

"Why does Adonis laugh at David?" I asked her as she came up to me. The uncommon but natural red in Alita's brown cheek deepened. "I have just been speaking of it," she said. "I will tell Missis."

It was the story of a great romance Alita unfolded to me, and it concerned Dinah, the daughter of Hercules, the herd.

*There was a time when Dinah had come daily to fetch the sour milk which was one of her father's perquisites ; but lately, for good reasons, she had not come. Except on the day of her wedding, I had, indeed, not seen Dinah for over a year.*

That wedding took place a month ago, and David was the bridegroom. Why David or anyone else should have chosen to fall in love with Dinah was one of those mysteries which nature kept secret in her own heart. She was a grave, thin little girl, who resembled her wizened and inappropriately-named father. All over the Cape Colony there are brown people who have adopted such names from their Dutch masters. . . . And she used to squat in the sunshine outside the kitchen door while David went to get her the sour milk for which she was waiting, very quietly, very solemn.

I assume she must have been about sixteen, but she looked twelve ; and she was really singularly ugly, even for a Kaffir of Griqualand West, with her flat nose, small eyes ; protuberant forehead, and high mouth. Nor could it have been her solitary physical merit of cleanness which captured David, for cleanness ■ not, among the River Kaffirs, a greatly-cherished attribute. . . .

Yet here commenced an idyll which, but for an unexpected mercenary intrusion, would have ended as simply as all idylls end. Of all things Hercules must needs insist that David should pay him for Dinah . . . as if these were the good old days, as if River Kaffirs were Zulus, and had such a thing as dignity left.

" But what had David to give Hercules ? " I asked Alita. " Had he cattle or horses or sheep or goats ? "

" There lies the thing," said Alita. " He had no beasts and no money. That was how the trouble began."

She went on to explain.

" Missis must understand," she said, " I am not one who believes the new fashions are the best. It is right the father should get something for his girl-child. He put her in the world and gave her food that she might work for him, that she might grind his mealies and carry his water. What does it mean if a father gives away his daughter for nothing ? Does it not mean that she is of no value to him ? When John Itumeleng married me he paid old Frans, my father, ten oxen and seven cows and fifteen sheep, and it was agreed also that we must give old Frans our eldest child when it was a year old. But those times are

gone. Then we had our lands and our herds. Then Alita would have sat in the kraal with her daughters-in-law and her grandchildren, and her ten fingers would not have been her only span of oxen. Then it was a different life. . . . Missis, we Kaffirs are not the people we used to be, and it is best we should know it."

"And so when Hercules wanted lobola for Dinah, what did David do?"

"He had to work for him, missis; he had to let him have every month the whole of what he earned. Only if someone gave Dinah a present could David keep anything for himself."

I remembered David's eagerly cupped hands as last year we gave him a farewell gift.

"And how long was this to go on?"

"For a year, missis. And because David and Dinah were anxious to marry soon, Dinah herself also went to work. She went to work for Mr. Jackson who has the farm on the other side of the river."

In this way, as Alita went on to tell, the year passed, and the time came when David was released from his bondage to Hercules, and could begin to work for himself.

But, even so, the wedding-day was not yet at hand. Now Hercules wanted David to save towards a wedding in the church and a feast. For that he had to have, not only a new coat and trousers and hat and shoes, but fifteen shillings for the missionary who came to perform the ceremony, and a pound for what they called the tea-meeting. Even the fifteen shillings was more than many Kaffirs were prepared to spend on sanctifying their unions, and most of them in these days came together like any other of the earth's creatures, hoping vaguely that the Lord would understand how hard it was for a Kaffir to save fifteen shillings for a wedding in the church, and would excuse them.

### III

In the meantime David and Dinah built their home. They built as the birds build. They gathered reeds in the river, and filled the spaces in between the reeds with mud, and covered them with grass. And thus they achieved a hive-shaped hut, into which, in due course, they might crawl through an opening about three feet high and two feet wide. This opening would be the

only concession to air and light ; and when they went to bed they would hang bags over it, and shut out the world of night ; the clean warm air ; the faint rumbling of the river ; the distant croaking of the frogs ; and all the little clear noises of loneliness. They would lie, their heads covered, in the clothes in which they lived by day, between dirty skins and blankets on a dung-smearred floor ; they would hide themselves from the frank, unclouded stars. . . . But, if it were full moonlight and summer-time, they would gather together the young folk for miles around, and they would dance and dance all night to the music of their own wild and harmonious singing, and the rhythmic clapping of girls' hands.

#### IV

" And in this manner," continued Alita, " another year went by. . . . And then one day David comes to Hercules and tells him that now he and Dinah must go and live together. It is the time. They cannot wait for weddings now, he says."

" And what did Hercules answer to that ? Was he angry ? "

" Well, missis knows Hercules. He is not an easy man. Yes, he was angry. He looks at David with his little eyes, and he does like this with his finger (Alita put her right forefinger in her mouth, pulled it out with a sucking noise, and pointed it upwards), and he says so true as his dead father, without a wedding David shall not have Dinah."

" But that wasn't so wrong of Hercules," I commented.

" No. That is true. It wasn't so wrong," admitted Alita.

" But the first thing was he still spoke of a big wedding, and the second thing is David had to buy this and that for the house too. He had ■ buy a Kaffir pot, and some mugs and a bag of mealie-meal. Missis knows what is a bag of mealie-meal with us Kaffirs."

I did know. It was a rampart against the future. Alita actually sent mealie-meal from Johannesburg to her family in Bloemfontein because she could not trust them not to waste her substance before life was thus made safe. . . .

" And so for five months," Alita continued, " David ate just once a day—in the evening ; he ate a little mealie-meal cooked with fat. Only when it was his chance to get the offal at a killing, or a beast died, only then did David eat meat. And at the end of five months they were able to have the wedding."

I had seen part of the wedding. When the ceremony was over, David in his new coat and trousers ; Dinah in a white muslin dress, with a wreath and veil on her head ; Hercules in an old frock-coat, riddled with moth, that some white man had once given him, and a pair of khaki trousers ; flower-girls also in white veils placed themselves at the head of a procession that went singing and dancing down to the river. They accepted presents from anyone who chose to give them, and when night came they feasted and danced until the food was gone and the stars were dead. . . .

Then David took Dinah to his home.

The next day he spent his last money on a blanket and some yards of print for the approaching baby.

Now only a few days ago David had come to announce to Alita that the baby was here.

"I asked him," said Alita, "if it was a fine baby. And he said yes, he had heard it was a fine baby."

"He heard ! Didn't he know. Hadn't he seen it ?"

"It is not our custom that the father should look at the baby before three days," Alita told me.

"I see," I said, and, having arrived at what appeared to be the end of the romance, I was about to turn away when I remembered suddenly why I had called Alita.

"But about Adonis," I asked. "Why was he laughing ?"

"Adonis ?" said Alita. "Yes. It was on the day after the baby was born that Adonis began to laugh. And not only Adonis. Other people too."

"Why ?" I asked, and remembered the bewildered and stricken look on David's face. "What was there to laugh about ?"

Alita's eyes met mine across a world of experience.

"They laughed because it was not David's baby," she said.

"How did they know ?"

"They had to know," said Alita in a tight voice. "And when David heard he went in too before the three days, and saw with his own eyes that it was not his baby, because it was a white baby. And he asked Dinah and she told him it was the baby of the man for whom she had worked that they might save money to get married, she and David. She said it was Mr. Jackson's baby. . . ."

Alita looked away to where Adonis was winding the bucket into the well again, and I looked too. A smile still lingered on his face. And suddenly, without another word, as if a physical force drove her, Alita went from me to Adonis, and struck him with her flat hand on his widened mouth.

The rope of the bucket ran sharply out as the hand of Adonis abandoned its work. Adonis stared at Alita. Then he made a little snort of contempt, turned back to his windlass, and deliberately laughed again.

## THE DOOMINGTON WANDERER

By LOUIS GOLDING

Louis Golding, born Manchester, 1895. Jumped into international fame with his "Magnolia Street." Educated Manchester Grammar School and Queen's College, Oxford. A globe-trotter. Publications : "Sorrow of War," "Poems, 1919," "Forward from Babylon," novel, 1920 ; "Prophet and Fool," poems, 1923 ; "Day of Atonement," novel, 1925 ; "Sicilian Noon," 1925 ; "Store of Ladies," 1927 ; "The Miracle Boy," 1927 ; "Those Ancient Lands, being a journey to Palestine," 1928 ; "The Prince or Somebody," novel, 1929 ; "Give up Your Lovers," novel, 1930 ; "Adventures in Living Dangerously," 1930 ; "Magnolia Street," 1932 ; "James Joyce," 1933 ; "Six Daughters of Finklestein," novel, 1933.

BEGLEY HILL, in the dark city of Doomington, was where he lived. He was the sort of obscure little Jew you saw but did not look at. He might speak, but you did not listen to him. Why should you ?

He lived with his mother in Jilk Street, which is one of the meaner avenues in that unradiant neighbourhood. His mother was not notable, except for the excellence of her cooking. But her competitors in Jilk Street were nearly all as able. Perhaps there was a certain ultimate savour about her *varrenikas* which Mrs. Levinsky could not compass and her *blintsies* were so fragile and airy that her own tenants, Mr. and Mrs. Murphy (who occupied the parlour and the front bedroom) condescended to share them with her.

His first name was Hyman. There was no reason why it should not be. The family name was Lipahin. He did not resent it. If some entirely grotesque destiny had named him Porphyrogenitos Ebenezer Andritsaena, he would have taken no steps in the matter. He had been educated at the Ealing Street school, not far away, where he had achieved no formidable distinction. His history was bad, his drawing was scarcely better, in geography he was top of the class. He knew where jute came from and whether Cotopaxi was a mountain or an isthmus, and where it was. The whereabouts of

Cedar Falls in Ohio did not deceive him, but he lost ground, as I have suggested, in the Wars of the Roses.

He was not elected, therefore, to any scholarship at a secondary school which might have enabled him to continue his researches into the products of Sfax and the situation in Filicudi. He became an invoice clerk in Messrs. Cohen and Montague's hat and cap works, where he remained for the next twenty years of his uneventful existence.

Messrs. Cohen and Montague allowed him to repair home well before his mother lit the Friday evening candles on the eve of the Sabbath, nor did they expect pagan dues from him in the matter of invoice clerking on the holy day that follows. The festivals too remained inviolate ; for though Mr. Montague was a scion of the ancient Norman aristocracy, Mr. Cohen was aware of the sancro-sanctitude of the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Hyman Lipshin drew a dim pleasure out of the white Friday evening clothes, the serried candlesticks, the brimful wine-beaker; out of the long hours of holy invocation at the little Synagogue round the corner. I said his pleasure was dim not because any other pleasures he experienced were crimson but because he lived dimly. His mind was not in Jilk Street nor at the hat and cap works of Messrs. Cohen and Montague. Do I make that statement on a *posteriori* grounds? Would Hyman himself have declared any such disturbing thing? I doubt it.

Mrs. Lipshin did not occupy herself with the question. Her domestic labours achieved, she brought forth her Pentateuch, with its Yiddish version interlaved, and bent her black wig towards the dog-eared pages. A butcher's skewer held in her frail but efficient fingers pursued hour beyond hour the awful eloquence. Her voice did not cease from its single intonation, hour beyond hour, until the Friday evening candles flickered in their sockets and she made ready for bed, at length, stumping off in her loose slippers. Hyman sat snoring in the corner, under the shelf where the samovar, so reverently brought over from Russia, stood. His feeble lower jaw dropped towards his chest.

Were there dreams, then, behind that sallow brow, behind the leaden waters of his eyes? What dreams shall Hyman Lipshin dream in a Jilk Street kitchen at the heart of the dark city of Doomington?

"Come then, Hyme! " his mother said, clawing at his shoulder.

He followed her as obediently at the age of thirty as at the age of three.

"I come, *mutterel*, little mother," he said.

Dreams? Dreams? What folly! No room for dreams in Doomington. What would Mr. Cohen say about it to Mr. Montague should their third invoice clerk take to dreaming? Rather more, I should fancy, than the old greybeards at the Synagogue might have said should they have heard that young Hyman Lipshin was possessed of any such malady. For they did not take much notice of him where he sat in his praying-shawl at a corner of the bench against the women's partition. He was not meritorious in the fervour of his religious transports; nor, on the other hand, an object of suspicion for any laxity in ceremonial observance. It was true he carried his handkerchief on the Sabbath not round his waist, but in his pocket. That was to be deplored. But no man had ever seen him ascend a tramcar upon the Sabbath. The bearded gentlemen greeted him courteously. They called him, honorifically, Reb Hyman.

Now what, I ask you, can have explained the mystery of the Pocket Atlas? Why Mr. Lipshin should find a Pocket Atlas an object worthy of his attention at all is mystifying, but why he should secrete it in his prayer-book on no less a day than *Rosh Hashonah*, the feast of the New Year, is surely a problem beyond all human solution. Most regrettable. The thing slid from his prayer-book on to the floor, open at a map of Polynesia. The beadle picked it up—not more than two yards away from the Holy Ark. There was a gasp of horror, a beardy whistle of dismay. Hyman Lipshin blushed all round his ears and a long way down his neck. He seized the atlas, thrust it into his pocket, and glued his eyes on to his prayer-book.

No explanation was asked for or forthcoming. It was all so incredible that quite soon everyone ceased to believe it. It was held to be a sort of autumnal hallucination. If it had happened at all, it had happened eight years ago.

Ten years ago——

Twelve years ago——

Then Uncle Gustave died.

Uncle Gustave was quite the supreme uncle of fiction. His name was very rarely mentioned in Jilk Street or anywhere at all in Doomington. He had lingered but briefly in that city during his

pilgrimage between Russia and the Argentine. He had disappeared westwards in the company of a Gentile maiden. He developed ranches and converted them later into cinematograph companies. It was rumoured the Gentile maiden was dead without issue. Uncle Gustave in due course died too, and confirmed the rumour. He left a handsome fortune to his brother's son, Hyman Lipshin, of Jilk Street in Doomington.

And then the mystery of the Pocket Atlas was resolved. Hyman Lipshin promptly took a ticket to Otaheite.

I wonder if it is all clear now? Surely it is. There was never a time when an infinite nostalgia for far places did not possess the sad little mind of Hyman Lipshin. Whether he checked moneys for the further glory of Messrs. Cohen and Montague, whether he stood meekly in his corner of the Synagogue reciting the Eighteen Prayers, enjoying the mild prestige due rather to his mother's piety than his own merits, whether he dozed under the samovar in the Jilk Street kitchen—his soul was over the seas and far away. He was possessed by a planetary glamour. He ascended the fir-slopes of Kirishimi or lay down under the date-laden palms of the oasis of Nefta. He penetrated the palaeolithic caverns of Puente Viesgo and beat the swamps of Papua. The surf thundered against the outer reefs of the coral islands. Lulled by that organ—music, a scarlet lily behind his ear, his fingers idly paddled the pellucid waters of the lagoon.

Otaheite, mainly. Bread-fruit, yam-yams, colossal turtles, coconuts, green macaws screeching in the branches, a scarlet-tufted monkey swinging by his tail. Otaheite—

He was no dynamic young man. They would merely at length have transported him to the cemetery on the confines of Begley Hill (for he had paid the burial dues punctiliously from an early age) and Kilimanjaro, Sunium, Nebraska, would have dissolved equally into undistinguished dust.

But, as I have said, Uncle Gustave died. And Hyman took a ticket for Otaheite. But to go to Otaheite and to be there are not the same things. Let me insist on making that clear. For it was not the thunder of the surf he heard in Otaheite, nor in Ravenna the sighing of the pine-branches. It was the sirens of the factories in Doomington he heard. He did not hear the dusky maidens chanting as they twined their hair with flowers, nor the bronzed peasants hallooing behind their oxen. He heard the old men

and women wailing on the Fast of the Destroyed Temple. How should little Hyman Lipshin detach from his ear-drums these ancestral voices and from his timid nostrils expel the fumes of the dark city ?

Otaheite was a failure as Ravenna was destined to be. He fared forth from the coral islands towards the creeks of the Amazon and later found himself upon the peaks of the Rockies. The voices were not stilled. And though the most superb cuisine of the expensive continent was laid before him upon such plate and flanked by such silver as Sennacherib would not have scorned, he found himself aching for the *halkies* steeped in the fat of chickens and the stuffed *varrenikas* and the crisp *blintsies* of his mother, though never in Jilk Street had the prospect of them caused any especial excitement in his bosom. Gentlemen of considerable accomplishments and ladies of no mean beauty courted him. But he remembered odd half-hours he had spent in the Jilk Street parLOUR with Mr. and Mrs. Murphy, his mother's tenants, and wondered how he had not perceived what wisdom was theirs and how graceful a humour.

Thereon he found himself in the Mediterranean basin, disconsolately wandering between Stamboul and Oran, hoping to find in Sicilian Castrogiovanni or in the holy Tunisian city of Kairwan the glory he had dreamed of in the offices of Messrs. Cohen and Montague. He did not succeed, nor in Nauplia, nor in Burgos. The great factories interposed themselves ; he heard only the machine drumming and, closer at hand, the old men chanting in the Synagogue. A curious obstinacy seized him, sapless little man that he was. He wandered wretchedly from continent to continent, from bleak northern fastness to lush tropic glade, seeking the lost glamour. Doomington was not to be dislodged. He was himself Doomington.

And then a letter reached him in some obscure corner of the world from his mother in Jilk Street. (She was a lady of the older sort, and though she might now so easily have transferred her black wig and Pentateuch to some horrific mansion in the Gentile suburbs, she would not for worlds be dislodged from Jilk Street, from her next-door neighbours or the Synagogue round the corner.)

Mrs. Lipshin was, in fact, ill. She hoped she might set eyes on her son again before she died, though the strange demon had withheld him so long from her. Her son sped home by whatsoever

most speedy and costly mode of travel was available. He did not arrive too late.

But when, some weeks later, she died and all that had seemed to bind him to Doomington was thus dissolved, he did not make swift preparations to render himself once again in the world's lost places. For indeed, no sooner had he set foot once more in Doomington than the Otaheite and Ravenna that had eluded him became manifest. He heard the thunder of the surf and the chanting of the dusky maidens. He heard the hallooing of the bronzed peasants behind their oxen. He appeared duly among the old men of the Synagogue, but now that their wailing was in his heart he did not hear it. Now that the smoke-pall hung all day over his head his vision pursued brilliantly and ruthlessly the superb contours of Etna. He did not move from the tiny house in Jilk Street, even though his mother was dead and the Murphys long since gone. He was appeased in the presence of their ghosts. He wandered from Jilk Street into Ealing Street, through the drab places in Begley Hill, linking thus the Carpathians with the Blue Mountains of Australia. His soul was fulfilled of its desire. He sat meekly among the grey-beards of the Synagogue, but there was no second scandal of an impious Pocket Atlas slipping down from the sacred pages of the prayer-book. He saw now those tawny pillars of Corinth which he had been blind to when his physical eyes beheld them. His Jilk Street candle was the infinite terracing of lights above the harbour of Hong-Kong.

But it had been Otaheite mainly, green macaws, hairy coconuts, tufted monkeys. And when he died it was the thunder of the surf among the coral-reefs he heard, as he lay paddling his fingers among the pellucid waters of the lagoon. Otaheite was a scarlet lily thrust behind his cold ear.

## THE MARTYR

*By* CECIL ROTH

Cecil Roth, born London, 1899. Served as a private in France and Flanders during the War. Studied at Oxford. First Class Final Honours School of Modern History. Contributor to "Encyclopedia Judaica," "Cambridge Medieval History," etc.

Publications : "The Last Florentine Republic," 1925 ; (Translated into Italian, 1929) ; "Iscariot," 1929 ; "History of the Jews in Venice," 1930 (Italian translation, 1932) ; "A History of the Marranos," 1932.

YEAR by year, on the sacred occasions when the Memorial Service is recited in the Synagogue of Meggersheim, mention is made with particular solemnity of the martyred Judith, daughter of Rabbi Moses, who was burned alive in the early part of the fourteenth century (as every child knows in the Community) "for the Sanctification of the Name." When this passage of the Memorbuch is reached, the Cantor bates his voice and reads with especial feeling. A suppressed weeping will inevitably be heard from the women's gallery, and hardly an eye in the building is left dry. When a young couple is married, their parents can think of no greater happiness to them than that they should be deemed worthy of a similar child. And if a daughter is born to any member of the Community, it is customary to bless her and say: "May the Lord make thee even as the holy Martyr, Judith, daughter of Rabbi Moses, of glorious memory."

Now this is the tale.

### I

Rabbi Moses ben Abraham of Meggersheim was a typical German Jew of the fourteenth century. His native character had been somewhat suppressed by the atmosphere of persecution which he had breathed in an increasing degree from his childhood upwards. His innate kindness was now buried under a layer of fanatical asceticism. That he failed to appreciate the gentle

teachings of the religion of Jesus was perhaps natural, seeing that he had been an eyewitness of the Rindfleisch massacres at his native place in 1298, when almost the whole of the Community—men women and children—had been butchered in the name of the Cross. He was one of the few who had escaped, establishing himself in this little town which he hoped (though without conviction), might be overlooked in the next persecution. He was considered the greatest Talmudic scholar in the whole district, being thus looked up to generally as Rabbi. Nevertheless, he would not accept any payment for the immense pains which he expended in the spiritual and intellectual leadership of the Community. He was therefore compelled to rely on worldly exertions for his living. He was indeed a skilled physician. But the Holy Catholic Church viewed with horror the practice of medicine by an infidel, who might thereby be given uncanonical influence over true believers. Accordingly, Rabbi Moses could not hope to benefit materially from his skill. Thus he was driven back for his livelihood upon the petty money-lending on pledge which alone remained open to the Jew by law. Like all his people, he was crushed with taxes, regular and irregular; and on more than one occasion a mob-rising had plundered him of all that he possessed. The inevitable consequence was that he had to raise his rate of interest, in compensation for losses in the past as well as in safeguard against recurrence in the future. As a result, in the intervals of spoliation he accumulated wealth with invidious rapidity.

In obedience to Talmudic precept, he had married young. His wife was Miriam, daughter of the Rabbi of Mulrichstadt. He had never set eyes on her before their wedding-day, the notorious scholarly merits of her father's house being in his opinion sufficient commendation. Indeed, he even dispensed with a dowry, trusting that the inherited wisdom of his offspring would compensate him amply for any material loss involved. Yet the Lord had not blessed him with any son, and the sole fruit of the union was a single daughter, whom they called Judith.

The child was brought up according to the recommendations of the Rabbis, ancient and modern, down to the most minute details. She could read and write, and actually practised both of these arts. Her knowledge of the minutiae of Jewish practice was remarkable, and occasionally disconcerting. She accompanied her father to the Synagogue, and she helped her mother in the kitchen

(the second religious stronghold). She had been seen on occasion even in the House of Study ; and she assisted as far as a woman could in her father's business. As she grew up, she developed outstanding personal attractions in addition to these accomplishments. Rabbi Moses comforted himself for the absence of male offspring by the thought that such a paragon as she would assuredly win him a learned son-in-law, from whose loins the Messiah perhaps might spring.

One afternoon, when she was about eighteen years of age, Judith was sitting alone in the counting-house making up the ledgers for the last week, employing (mainly out of convenience, though partly to ensure secrecy) the crabbed and jargonised Hebrew usual for such purposes. Her father, who was engaged in writing a super-commentary upon the glosses of Rashi to the Talmudic tractate *Niddah*, was poring over his books in his study ; an intricate occupation in which he frequently indulged with closed eyes after the mid-day meal. Her mother was brazenly taking her afternoon nap. In the other houses along the Judengasse, the residents were similarly occupied. The silence was disturbed by a heavy clattering along the cobbles of the roadway accompanied by a cheerful whistling. Both stopped immediately in front of the house of Rabbi Moses. The door of the room, which opened directly into the street, was unceremoniously flung open, and in there walked a richly dressed young man, with a large golden brooch fastening his ample cloak.

Judith rose to her feet and stood respectfully, with downcast eyes, waiting for him to speak.

" This is the house of the Jew Moses, is it not ? " asked the young man.

" Yes, sir," she replied. " My father is in the other room."

" Your father, eh ? " observed he, ogling her shamelessly. " Tell me, why do these ugly old Jews have such paragons of beauty as daughters ? "

" I will tell my father that you are here, sir," said Judith, pretending not to hear. But, in spite of the racial slight, she flushed with pride at the personal compliment.

" Not so quickly away ! " cried the other, as she tripped towards the door. " Do not deprive me so soon of the radiance of your presence. Would you not wish to tell your father who it is that has come to see him ? "

"■ you please, sir," she said, demurely, stopping and turning round towards him.

"It ■ Conrad von Rittenhofen," said the youth, with a touch of pride. Ulrich von Rittenhofen, his father, was well known in the city as one of the patricians of proudest lineage and least substance.

"Conrad von Rittenhofen," repeated Judith, beginning to move away again. "Thank you, sir."

"It has a fine ring, has it not?" said the young man naïvely. "In sooth, though, it sounds finer still from your lips. But now you know my name, is it not fair to tell me yours?"

"Judith," she murmured, conquered by the irresistible logic of the argument, but feeling nevertheless that she was not perhaps acting rightly in complying with his request.

"Judith!" he repeated dubiously, as if tasting the sound on his tongue. "Judith! It is a pretty name, but somehow I like it not. It was she that slew Holofernes, was it not? The thought makes me feel quite afraid of you. I shall call you Rose of Sharon."

She laughed a little in spite of herself. He looked admiringly at the white teeth she displayed, and at the tempting line of her figure. But a slight sound from the other room made her suddenly nervous, and she ran to warn her father of the visitor who had come. She did not return again into the counting-house. But there was no difficulty in hearing through the closed door the salient parts of a lengthy altercation in which the phrases "dog of a Jew" and "skinflint" recurred with monotonous regularity, to be met with extravagant protestations that to consent to milder terms would be equivalent to inviting utter ruin. Some ten minutes later, the chink of coins falling upon the table signified that the transaction was at an end. The door then opened, and Conrad von Rittenhofen went out into the roadway, fastening his pouch as he walked, but no longer wearing the golden brooch which he had flaunted so proudly on his cloak when he came in.

Once outside, he stood for a little time scanning the windows, hoping for another glimpse of the dainty apparition which had greeted his arrival. He was disappointed, however. Judith did not show herself at the casement, preferring to satisfy her curiosity by a cunning arrangement of mirrors. Before she had feasted her eyes to the full, he tired of waiting, and set off down the Judengasse whistling in an even more cheerful key than when he came. Rabbi Moses returned meanwhile to his books, chuckling a little over the

excellent bargain he had driven, and wondering why his new client had been so unexpectedly accommodating.

From that day, Conrad von Rittenhofen became a regular client of Rabbi Mosca. Hardly a week passed but he had some business which brought him to the Judengasse. When he had nothing left to pledge, he actually came on more than one occasion to redeem some trifling object—a phenomenon hitherto unprecedented in any member of his house. He always chose to arrive in the hours just after the mid-day meal, when Judith was usually at work in the counting-house; and a little conversation would inevitably pass between them before she went in to arouse her father. The old man knew nothing of this. Even if he had, he would not have minded overmuch. Gossip between man and woman, even if they were married, was indeed undesirable, and had been specifically condemned in the *Ethics of the Fathers*. But this applied only to the chosen people among themselves. That talk with a Gentile should go beyond the most formal limits never so much as crossed his mind.

Meanwhile in the evenings, when the young men toasted the ladies of their choice at the Three Crowns, Conrad von Rittenhofen relinquished the innkeeper's fair daughter to his erstwhile rivals, and always drank to his Rose of Sharon. The others were kept mystified as to whom this might represent—not so much because he felt any real reticence on the subject as because he considered that a cloak of secrecy enhanced the air of romance.

One afternoon in the spring, Judith went to the market place to buy some herbs in readiness for the approaching festival. The season was in her blood, and she had dressed herself accordingly, but she gave a sigh of despair as she covered her head with the unsightly saffron kerchief which the Jewish women had to wear as their badge of shame. While she was chaffering with the market-women, as ceremonial demanded, the sky became overcast. A thunderstorm seemed imminent as she hurried away with the heavily-laden basket over her arm.

"Whither away so fast?" called a familiar voice at her heels.

She turned and saw young Conrad, though as a matter of fact she had already recognised the tone. Her bosom was rising and

falling with breathlessness—and something else. The young man eyed it admiringly as she dropped a curtsy.

"I am going home, sir," she said.

"But why so quickly? Do you know that I had to run to catch you up?" He put on a mock-dismal air, which he knew would make her laugh.

"I want to get back before the rain starts," she said. "I must hurry. There! it has begun already."

As she spoke, a couple of heavy drops splashed down on her upturned face. She lifted up her kirtle, and began to trip away.

"You must let me carry your basket, then," said the young man, after a rapid glance around to see that there was no one about to see him perform this menial duty for a Jew's daughter. He seized the handle as he spoke.

She would not let go. "Oh no, sir," she said. "I could not think of such a thing. Please let me have it!"

There was a moment's tussle between them for mastery. The sky meanwhile became darker and darker. A vivid flash of lightning was followed by a sullen rumble of thunder, and a veritable deluge began.

She gave a little shriek, and piously repeated the ritual benediction prescribed for such a juncture:—*Blessed art thou, O Lord, whose power and might fill the world.*

"Do not be afraid!" said Conrad, soothingly (though he had been secretly much relieved at hearing what he imagined to be a spell to ward off the lightning). "There is a place here where we can take shelter."

She relinquished the basket in his hand, and allowed herself to be guided to an empty shed which stood a few yards off. Outside, the storm continued to rage.

### III

When her condition was too far advanced to be disguised any longer, Judith's mother, who had frequently been eyeing her curiously of late, asked her about it point-blank. A sudden burst of weeping confirmed her worst suspicions.

Rabbi Moses when he was informed, was deeply shocked. Such things were known to occur even in the Judengasse, though not in families of such standing as his. Nevertheless, he did not allow his

passion to carry him too far. After all, the thing was done, and all that remained was to face matters and attempt to remedy them.

After his first burst of anger was over, he summoned his daughter into his presence. He did not consult his wife, who sat silent in the corner, acquiescing beforehand in whatever her husband might decide.

"It is not too late to make good the outcome of your sin," he said, without more ado. "Our Sages teach, indeed, that a woman may be wedded in more ways than one, and among them is that which you have chosen. Tell me, my daughter, who the young man is, and we will prepare you a marriage contract according to the custom of Moses and of Israel."

Judith shook her head in silence, looking at him with eyes big with tears.

"What! is it then a married man?" cried the old Rabbi, in indignation. "Alas! that such a disgrace should come upon my house. Who is it? I will put him to the ban, that all the congregation may know what a son of Belial we have in our midst!"

"It is not a married man," whispered Judith, cowering in fear of the anger that should come.

Her father rose from his chair, and walked over towards her, a terrible suspicion in his eye. Laying his hands upon her shoulder and forcing her round so that he looked her squarely in her face, he spoke in a tone she had never heard from him before.

"Who is it? I command you to tell me!" he ordered sternly.

"Conrad von Rittenhofen." Her voice could hardly be heard. She shrank away in an agony of shame, covering her face with her hands.

"Conrad von Rittenhofen!" he repeated, with scorn, "Conrad von Rittenhofen! that uncircumcised wastrel! I knew that he was haunting this house to no good purpose, though I imagined that there was something different in his eye. Would that there had been!" He paused for a moment, and then his pent-up feelings burst forth suddenly. "Away with you!" he thundered, turning on Judith. "Away with you! You are no daughter of mine, you who have prostituted yourself to a Gentile. Away to your paramour and to his strange gods!" He seized her by the shoulder and almost hurled her to the door. "Get you gone! Woe is me, that I should live to see this day. Get you gone!"

Judith gathered herself from the floor and crept slowly out of the

room. Her last impression was that of her father still standing upright in the middle of the floor, his eyes blazing with anger. Her mother was still weeping silently in her corner, her wifely loyalty suppressing even the maternal sympathy which was surging in her bosom.

When he heard the door of the house close behind his daughter, Rabbi Moses rent his garments, and blessed aloud the righteous Judge who had given and taken away. For seven days he sat upon the ground in mourning over his only child, now dead to him for all time : and all of the Community came to condole with him in his grief. But of that which had caused all this no man said a word.

#### IV

When she left her father's house, there was only one place to which Judith could go—that which the old man had indicated in his rage. Almost mechanically, she directed her steps towards the house of Ulrich von Rittenhofen. At the door, she saw young Conrad standing with his father, deeply immersed in conversation with Father Peter, the most fanatical of all the priests of the city. On another occasion she would have avoided the latter, for she knew that he hated the Jews above all things, and denounced them from the pulpit in all of his sermons as enemies of the human kind.

Her extremity however gave her courage. Without saying a word, she sank down before Conrad and embraced his knees. The young man might have treated her more tenderly had he been alone. But as it was he shook himself loose roughly.

"What do you want?" he said, harshly.

"I have come to you—I, and your child," she replied simply, with a single gesture.

"I do not know what you mean," he retorted, uneasily, turning to go into the house away from her. She stood looking at him dumbly, in blank terror, not knowing what could be her next step.

Ulrich von Rittenhofen, who had been watching, called to his son. "What is the matter?" he asked. "What does the pretty Jewess want of you?"

"She pretends that I am the father of her child," muttered the young man, throwing an uncomfortable glance in the direction of the priest.

"Well . . ." Ulrich's features began to dispose themselves in a broad grin, in which masculine sympathy and paternal pride were mingled. A glance at Father Peter's face checked him, however, and made him assume an air of preternatural solemnity.

"What is this that I hear?" cried the priest, coming forward, his bloodshot eyes blazing with hatred under their beetling brows. "Has the flock of Christ in this sinful place sunk to such depths? Fornication between Jew and Gentile is worse by far than incest, as you all know full well. The decretals of the Church are plain upon this point. The punishment is death!"

"Come, Father Peter," said Ulrich von Rittenhofen, soothingly. "Do not take the matter so seriously. My son denies the imputation—did you not hear him?"

"The Church does nothing without the fullest investigation," rejoined the priest, grimly. "As for this woman, the facts are plain: she is guilty on her own confession. Your son's case must be enquired into later."

"Do not be severe with the lad, Father," pursued Ulrich. "He is only a boy, after all. He may well have been bewitched by this woman with her enchantments. She is a sorceress without a doubt. I myself have seen her writing in their accursed Hebrew tongue in her father's house."

"Perchance you are right," replied the priest. "It is well known how this abominable people is addicted to sorcery above all nations—their womenfolk especially. For your son, some lesser punishment may perhaps be found. But the practice of witchcraft is a capital sin. Herein is all the more reason why the woman must die."

In Meggersheim, in those days, Father Peter's will was law.

Upon Conrad, there was imposed exemplary penance. He was condemned ■ fast for the whole of the month to come, tasting neither meat nor wine. He was ordered to go on pilgrimage to the shrine of the Three Kings at Cologne, which city he had never visited yet. He had to pay, moreover, for ten pounds of wax candles to burn before the altar of the Virgin in Father Peter's own parish church: an expenditure which necessitated another visit to the Judengasse. As far as the partner of his sin was concerned, the priest was inexorable. The Burgomaster hastened to carry out his sentence, though he was humanely enjoined to see that there

should be no effusion of blood. In consequence, at the first opportunity, Judith was taken out into the market-place and burned alive. The execution was regarded by the whole township as a splendid spectacle, and few of the inhabitants were absent. From all the countryside for miles around, too, the peasants streamed in to witness this rare sight. For many years afterwards, it formed a topic of conversation in winter evenings. Only in the Judengasse no impression was made: for there the person who was being burned was already regarded as dead, by all excepting one fond old woman.

Not a single groan to betray her suffering escaped from the victim. But those who were nearest to the pyre afterwards recounted that down to the last moment they could perceive in her eyes a look of dumb agony and reproach, such as they had never seen before and hoped never to see again. Meanwhile the birds were singing in the eaves and the sun was infusing the atmosphere with its warmth, summoning all of nature to life and love.

In the civic records, the event was baldly noted down without comment: "*On this day Judith, daughter of the Judenmeister Moses, was burned in the market-place.*"

Not long afterwards, at the time of the Black Death, the inhabitants of Meggersheim, at the instigation of Father Peter, savagely attacked their Jewish fellow-townsmen on a charge of having poisoned the wells. Their guilt was plain: for when pestilence was ravaging the whole township, not a single victim had been claimed in the Judengasse. As it happened, Rabbi Moses, whose wife Miriam had died in the previous year not long after her daughter, fell before the sword of Conrad von Rittenhofen, for the young man was naturally anxious to recover certain pledges which he had left in the other's keeping.

Thus the Community of Meggersheim was exterminated. Its old traditions were blotted out: and it was many years before Jews again began to settle in the city.

## V

Now it happened that in the course of the nineteenth century the Community had as its spiritual guide a young Rabbi fresh from one of the great new seminaries and imbued with modern ideas. Wishing to write a history of the local Jewry, he was naturally not

content with using the printed sources, but went to the original documents in the civic archives. There he found in the ancient notarial registers how, in the early part of the fourteenth century, Judith, daughter of the Judenmeister Moses, had been burned in the market-place of the city. The discovery filled his eyes with tears : and he immediately wrote for a learned review ■ short article on this unknown and isolated martyr, indicating with great acumen the political, economic, and religious conditions which were unquestionably responsible for her fate. Her father he identified with that Rabbi Moses of Meggersheim who wrote a super-commentary ■ the glosses of Rashi on the first part of the Talmudic tractate *Niddah* (the work, apparently was never finished, or else has come down to us in a fragmentary condition). But he was not content with this purely scientific use of his discovery. In order to immortalise the memory of the long-forgotten martyr and to infuse his Community with a proper pride in their history, he had the name inserted in the *Memorbuch* of the congregation, among the other great figures of its past. His endeavours succeeded to the full, the indubitable historical fact being reinforced in the popular imagination by probabilities, and ultimately by legend.

Thus it happens that year after year, when the Memorial Service is recited in the Synagogue of Meggersheim, mention is made with particular solemnity of the martyred Judith, daughter of Rabbi Moses, who was burned alive in the early part of the fourteenth century (as every child knows in the Community) "for the sanctification of the Name." When this passage of the *Memorbuch* is reached, the Cantor bates his voice and reads with especial feeling. A suppressed weeping will inevitably be heard from the women's gallery, and hardly an eye in the crowded building is left dry. When a young couple is married, their parents can think of no greater happiness to wish them than that they should be deemed worthy of a similar child. And if a daughter is born to any member of the Community, it is customary to bless her, and say: "May the Lord make thee even as the Holy Martyr, Judith, daughter of Rabbi Moses, of glorious memory."



## AMERICAN SECTION

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## THE GREATEST FUNERAL IN THE WORLD

*By* HERMAN BERNSTEIN

Herman Bernstein, born Russia, 1876. Educated in Europe and America. Now United States Minister to Albania. Special correspondent of "New York Times" to European countries, 1908-9-11-12, interviewing some of the most famous people in the world. Published a collection of these interviews "Celebrities of Our Time." Went to Russia, 1917, as special correspondent of "New York Herald" to describe the Revolution. Published (with foreword by Theodore Roosevelt) the "Willy-Nicky" telegrams, the secret correspondence between the Kaiser and the Czar, which attracted world-wide attention. Was in Russia to study the Bolshevist developments in 1918. War Correspondent in Siberia with A.E.F. and to the Czecho-Slovak Front in the Urals. Represented "Herald" at Versailles Peace Conference. Made special investigation of pogroms in Poland. Barred from Russia by Soviet Government for articles criticising Bolshevist rule. Sent by "New York American" to Europe to describe new States created by Peace Treaties. Was with Henry Ford on his "Peace Ship." Obtained a personal apology from Henry Ford when he recanted his antisemitism and stopped his antisemitic campaign. Author of "The History of a Lie," exposing the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" as a forgery. Former Secretary American Jewish Committee. Founder and editor, 1914-16, of the New York Yiddish daily, "The Day," editor-in-chief "American Hebrew," 1916-19, Editor "Jewish Tribune" till 1924. Published several volumes, novels, poems, etc. Translated works by Tolstoy, Tchechov, Gorky and Andreyev. Introduced Andreyev to America in 1909.

A newly-arrived German economist, a Scandinavian novelist, and an American social reformer were discussing social problems. It was long past midnight and only a small group of members of the club remained. They spoke of the social unrest that ■ spreading in various lands.

The economist remarked that this unrest usually grew in time of prosperity, for then the labouring masses were better equipped to insist on their rights. The novelist declared that the unrest was due to the natural growth of revolutionary tendencies everywhere

and he pointed out that the progressive and revolutionary movements were making rapid strides in America as well as in Europe.

Suddenly the American social reformer, who had said but little that evening, remarked :

"The breeders of revolution are not necessarily in the ranks of the masses. The autocrats of industry and finance are often the most dangerous of firebrands. They defy the law and incite the passions of the people. Let me give you an illustration. Whether this actually happened or not is not important. It might happen. It illustrates a condition of affairs that is almost tragic."

He then related the following story :

There was a tall, slim, bald-headed millionaire, whose word was law to his associates and the thousands of people employed in his shops and factories, and whose whims could hurl his entire country into a panic. One day he was irritated and angry. He banged the massive table with his bony fist and said in a squeaking voice :

"I am going to fight them to the bitter end. I'll shut down all our works for a year—for ten years, if necessary—rather than yield to the demands of the labour leaders. If they want battle, I am ready for them !"

He coughed and reddened as he spoke. His deep-set eyes were glassy, and his thin, long neck gave him the appearance of a serpent.

The three other members of the firm did not care to contradict him. They knew the old man's temper. After a brief silence, the old man's son, a clean-shaven, pale-faced man of about forty, said irresolutely :

"I know you are right. Their demands are impossible. I know we can crush them. But I think it would be unwise to irritate public opinion at this time. I believe it would be better for us to handle the situation diplomatically. There is a wave of general unrest throughout the country and the press may attack us and hold us responsible for any outbreak. We have reports that the unions are concentrating their forces, and you never can tell how far they may go. My opinion is that it would be best to meet them half way. Let us make another effort to come to an understanding."

The two other members of the firm agreed with the younger man.

The old man rose from his chair, his eyes flashing and his face twitching nervously.

"Not while I am the head of this firm!" he shouted. "Not as long as I live. I have always fought labour. And I am not going to change my policies now. I am not going to admit defeat at this stage of the game."

The other members of the firm realised that they could not sway the old man from his determination. They suggested several plans and enumerated the immediate advantages that might be gained by compromising with the labour leaders, but the old man mastered the situation with an iron will.

Suddenly he looked at the three financiers with a smile and said :

"Young men, you think that I am behind the times. You believe that my methods are outworn. It is your opinion that new ways should be sought, but I am telling you that my experience of a lifetime has taught me that human nature never changes. There will always be masters and there will always be slaves. This war, young men, and in war as in love all means are fair."

He chuckled strangely, then added :

"I know that I am perhaps the most despised man in this country. The working people everywhere consider me their bitterest enemy. But I am not concerned about it. I am telling you that human beings are not yet free, and the strongest will always be the master."

He paused. Then he added, half in earnest, half in jest :

"Now my days are numbered. What would you say if I were to predict to you that when I die, my funeral will be the greatest the world has ever known? The multitudes that will follow my coffin will outnumber the multitudes that formed the funeral processions of emperors and kings."

He laughed again.

"You shall see. That will serve you as a lesson. But,"—he grew solemn again—"to get back to business, I repeat that as long as I live I shall permit no compromise with these labour leaders!"

The strike broke out. The men, women, and children employed by the old millionaire left the factories at the command of their leaders. Mass meetings were held. Agitators came and spoke to

them words of encouragement. The people marched through the streets of the city and made demonstrations.

But the cold weather set in and intensified the misery of the strikers, and soon bread gave out in most of the homes of the working people. When the children cried for food and the mothers could not give it to them, they grew faint-hearted. After a desperate struggle the thousands of people, defeated by the sick old man, returned to his factories, upon the old terms. They were glad to return to work to be able to feed their children and their wives.

Several years went by. The people employed by the firm of the old man who was hardly able to walk now worked hard, embittered yet afraid to demand decent treatment and a living wage. They remembered the horrors of the last strike. And they turned a deaf ear to their leaders who again urged them to renew their demands.

The name of the old millionaire had become ever more and more despised among the people. The press often criticised him for his reactionary policies and for his autocratic and unscrupulous methods. The agitators denounced him upon all occasions. He was caricatured and ridiculed and attacked in the labour publications.

One day the newspapers announced the death of the old man who practically held the equilibrium of the market in the palm of his hand. Detailed accounts of his last hour were given ; his last words were reproduced in large type, and the stock exchange both in America and Europe became nervous. The story of his life and of his achievements was published broadcast, and editorials analysed the remarkable personality of the self-made American millionaire. The reactionary organs of the press set him up as an example for the youth of the country, speaking of his perseverance and of his genius. The progressive portion of the press criticised him mildly, yet praised him at the same time for his activities as a philanthropist, and the labour organs pictured in dark colours his rôle as an exploiter of labour and an enemy of the people.

He died suddenly. He had just returned from church where he listened to a sermon by a fashionable preacher. On the way home in his automobile he suddenly felt an acute pain in his chest. He

was helped up the stairs to his room by his servants, and his house physician was quickly summoned. While waiting for his physician he wrote a few lines, sealed the note and placed the envelope on the table near his bed.

When this letter was opened, after his death, the members of the family were thrown into a state of consternation. Their first impulse was to suppress this letter. But the minister, who had been sent for, also read the letter. All agreed that the legal advisers should be consulted without delay. The legal representatives of the dead millionaire were called in haste. Finally, upon their advice, it was decided to make public the letter left behind by the old man.

The publication of the document created a sensation through the land. It read as follows :

" I feel that my end has come. I have made my last will and testament, in legal form, and it will be found in my safe at the office. It is my wish that my will shall be read to the public at my funeral. I have made provision in my will to distribute my estate among those who will join in the procession ■ my funeral. This is to redeem the errors of my ways in the past."

The unusual message caused all other news of the day to dwindle into insignificance. The accounts of the war, of the aviators who were killed, of the steamer that was disabled and flashing wireless calls for help, the message of the President,—all were forced to the background by the remarkable last message of the despised old millionaire.

The labour leaders held a conference. They were confronted by a situation which was new and extraordinary and they did not know how to cope with it. At first they were reserved and guarded. Some of the chief leaders suggested that only they should represent the organisation at the funeral. But most of the other leaders refused to listen to such counsel. They insisted that they must also be present.

The working people had meanwhile gathered in the squares. They were addressed by the leaders who cautioned them against attending the funeral on the ground that it would not be in keeping with the dignity of the labouring class, which had always been exploited by the dead millionaire, to join in the funeral procession. But since he repented, the leaders would represent the organisation and its interests and issue statements at the proper time. But the

people would not listen to these leaders. They too wanted to participate in the division of the old man's estate.

"We have slaved for him. Now we want a share of his fortune," they cried.

Desperate struggles ensued. All wanted to accompany the dead millionaire to his last resting place. When the leaders saw that it would be of no avail to hold back the mass of the working people, they resolved that only that union should be represented, since that union was directly exploited by the old millionaire. But soon the other unions learned of this decision, and they revolted. They declared that the old millionaire made no discriminations, and as he had wronged all labour, they too had a right to be represented.

The ministers who had on repeated occasions censured the methods of the old millionaire now issued statements lauding his greatness. They said that in his last hour he saw the light of God and his heart had grown generous just before departing this life. Some of the ministers held a meeting. They were all eager to join in the funeral procession as a tribute to the last great act of the millionaire, explaining that they wished to do this merely to inspire others to emulate his example.

The three days that followed were days of chaos in the great metropolis. The people thought of nothing save the funeral of the old millionaire. The majority of the labour leaders made an arrangement to be in the lead of the procession. Those of the preachers who decided to go to the funeral refrained from speaking of this to their parishioners, fearing lest they might also decide to attend the funeral. The police force was making elaborate preparations to prevent riots, yet somehow every high official sought to be on duty at the funeral. There was great agitation in the offices of the newspapers. Most of the editors wanted to cover the story themselves, saying that they could not trust it to the reporters. And the editorial staff of the labour organ resolved to go in a body to the funeral of the enemy of labour. They argued that it was a good thing to go to a millionaire's funeral on general principles, and that they would spend their share of the millionaire's fortune on improving the news organ of the proletariat.

The funeral was the greatest the world has ever seen. At dawn streams of people—young and old, men, women, and children—

## THE GREATEST FUNERAL IN THE WORLD

were pouring from the streets and side streets towards the magnificent mansion of the dead millionaire. They hurried and struggled and thronged the avenue, so that at eight o'clock in the morning it was impossible ■ pass the neighbouring streets. All traffic was paralysed. The cars could not run. The shops were closed and people did not go to work.

No one wanted to miss the funeral of the most despised man in the country ; no one wanted to miss his or her share of the millionaire's fortune.

The railway stations were animated with throngs that arrived with each incoming train from neighbouring cities, towns and villages. Special excursion trains, at reduced rates, were carrying crowded carloads of people from different directions.

The funeral procession started. The enormous mass of humanity moved slowly, good naturedly at first ; then the thugs and the greediest elements commenced to assert themselves, and here and there disputes, quarrels and fights broke out. The police led the procession. Then came the labour leaders. Then the ministers walked. Then the editors. And then the mob followed.

It was drizzling at first. A little later it commenced to rain fast, yet the throng kept growing rapidly.

At last the procession reached the cemetery where the millionaire was to be laid to rest. By that time the crowd had grown wildly excited. The weaker people were trampled and their cries rent the air for miles on all sides.

Suddenly the people nearest the coffin were hushed. A tall man in a high silk hat, the lawyer of the old millionaire, in a ringing voice commanded the mob to maintain order. An umbrella was opened, and held over his head by a tall police officer.

" I am now going to make public the last testament of the deceased ! " he shouted.

" Silence ! "

" Order ! "

" Keep quiet ! "

" Hurrah ! "

These exclamations rolled over the enormous mass of agitated humanity.

The rain was beating into the faces of the people as they raised their heads and gazed at the tall man in the silk hat, open-mouthed.

He drew from his pocket a large envelope and took out a paper bearing a large seal. He glanced at the document, turned pale and hesitated, but the crowd was growing restless and impatient. So he mastered himself and read in a quivering voice :

" Before my will is made public I desire that my last message to the public shall be read. I have lived my life as I have wanted to live it. I have worked up from the depths of society and have risen to the top. I have advanced step by step, degree by degree. I have seen the pettiness and ugliness of life. I have suffered and in return I have made others suffer. I have learned from experience that ideals, honour, fame, glory—all are trifles when compared with the power of gold ! I have fought organised labour and have made myself the most despised man in the country. And yet you are all here now, you have all come here to my funeral—you idealists, you honourable men and women, you enemies of mine—all in pursuit of my money ! Hypocrites ! You have come like a herd of cattle ! "

A murmur passed through the mob.

" He brought us here to mock us ! " exclaimed a dark-eyed labour leader excitedly. " What an outrage ! "

" Order ! " " Silence ! " " Keep quiet ! " came from all sides.

The lawyer went on reading :

" You hated me because I have been cleverer than you ; because I have been more successful than you ; because I have been more daring than you ! I have fought you openly. I have achieved what you are all secretly longing for. I have amassed a fortune. You are all striving to do that. With all your hatred for me, your greed has brought you here. Fools ! And to make you feel your folly all the more keenly I am going to deceive you. I have beaten you during my lifetime and I am going to beat you now that I am dead ! I shall hurl your folly into your faces !

" I hereby give, devise and bequeath my estate to my son and two daughters, to be divided among them equally share for share alike. I give the sum of 500,000 dollars to the church where I worshipped God who has given me the wisdom to master you !

" I leave to you—to the people, to the sheep now following my bier, the sum of 5,000 dollars to be divided among all of you equally. I know that perhaps a million people will be at my funeral. So you shall have a few pennies as a souvenir from the

man you have despised, but who now mocks you even in his coffin ! ”

Untold confusion broke out. Curses, protestations, denunciations smote the air. The police commenced to use their clubs to restore order and to push back the infuriated mob. After desperate efforts the throngs were driven back from the cemetery.

At the funeral of the great firebrand hundreds of men, women, and children were trampled to death in the struggle and the excitement.

. . . . .

The social reformer paused. His story was ended.

“ I would call this a satire on modern society,—in fact, an indictment of society as it is constituted today,” remarked the novelist.

The German economist said:

“ This is fiction and therefore we cannot take it into consideration when we discuss social problems.”

The social reformer hesitated a few moments before answering. Then he said resolutely :

“ Unfortunately, there is a great deal of truth in this story. But you must remember that not all the labour leaders rushed to that funeral. Not all the ministers, not all the editors, not all the working people ran in pursuit of money. Some who could have gone stayed away. And among these, I believe, are the people who will help in the readjustment of our social wrongs. These have the divine spark within them which lifts them above selfish greed. They are perhaps small in number, but they are always and everywhere with us.”

## THE SAMOVAR

*A Little Tale, in the Russian Manner, without Psychology*

By JOHN COURNOS

John Cournos, born 1881, in Kiev, in the Ukraine. Taken to America by his family in his tenth year. Mainly self-educated. Became a journalist in Philadelphia. Came to London at the age of thirty, and began his career as an author. Was a member of the Anglo-Russian Commission in Petrograd, 1917-18. Publications—novels: "The Mask," 1919; "The Wall," 1921; "Babel," 1922; "The New Candide," 1924; "Miranda Masters," 1926; "O'Flaherty the Great," 1927; "Grandmother Martin is Murdered," 1930; "Wandering Women," 1930; "The Devil is an English Gentleman," 1931; "Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggarman, Thief," 1932. He has also published "A Modern Plutarch," 1928 (biography); "Sport of Gods," a play; and "In Exile," a volume of poems.

Translated from the Russian novels of Féodor Sologub and Alexey Remizov. Co-editor 1922-25 of "The Best Short Stories (English)"; translator and editor, "Short Stories out of Russia," 1925. Editor "American Short Stories of the Nineteenth Century" (Everyman's Library), 1930.

### I

IVAN PETROFF's custom, since becoming a widower, was to leave the lumber-yard, of which he was the owner, precisely at four o'clock each day and to wend his way home, where a hot samovar awaited him with a punctuality not less exact. A samovar, as every good Russian knows, is, if a comfort, not the same thing as a wife, even though it take turns at being hot and cold, at humming a song and keeping silent, at shining brightly on gala days—reflecting gladness—and being dully irresponsible on others. Nevertheless, since his wife's death, Petroff—or Ivan Stepanitch, as he was familiarly called—resisted the importunities of match-makers: one might as well have asked him to have another samovar in the place of the one he had. Petroff had chosen that samovar with great care, just as he had chosen his lamented wife with great care. The one he saw in a shop window—the samovar, of course—the other behind a shop counter: nothing strange, to

be sure, in either fact. How often he had passed that window and paused to look at the samovar. There was something about it that struck his fancy, just as later there was something about the woman he had married that struck his fancy. It was not shaped quite like other samovars ; or rather, this particular samovar had a shape others hadn't. Other samovars had a straight up and down effect, without any curves or deviations in the body to make the thing interesting and piquant to the eye ; this samovar curved in at the middle like a Greek urn or a finely-shaped woman's waist. Though Petroff was far from being a *barin* (a noble), he somehow had an eye for these things : a fact which imparted a measure of confirmation to the report of his grandmother having been the illegitimate daughter of a *barin* in the neighbourhood. One day, after a long wooing of that samovar, unable any longer to resist the ever urging possessive instinct, he walked into the shop and at his request the young woman behind the counter went to the window and, lifting the desired object high with both her hands—a manoeuvre which set off the young woman's shapeliness—put it tenderly on the counter. The whole effect was of a woman lifting a baby under her arms ; at least so it seemed to Ivan Petroff. She smilingly looked down on the samovar and waited for Petroff to speak.

"How much ?" muttered Petroff.

The young woman named the price.

"Rather high, isn't it ?" said Petroff.

"I've got some at half the price," replied the young woman, still smiling. "But, of course, they are not the same thing. Look at the shape—the sparkle too ! One in a thousand——"

"Y-yes—I see——" murmured Petroff, not looking at all at the samovar. He was actually, in a half-dazed way, realising the background. He somehow, as yet vaguely, grasped that she, in her tight-fitting black frock, set off the samovar ; the thought that they were like two pieces of a set stunned him. Yes, one in a thousand !

"I'll t-take it," he said at last hesitatingly, and slowly pulled out his wallet.

"Name and address, please !"

"Oh !—Ivan——"

"Ivan——" repeated the young woman after him, writing at the same time.

"Deuce take it ! How prettily she says it ! " thought Petroff, while she, pencil in hand, patiently waited.

"Ivan——" she repeated, noting his absent look and wishing to give him his cue.

"That's right," he said, "Ivan—Ivan Ste-pa-nitch—I mean Stepanovitch——"

"Ivan Stepanovitch——" she repeated after him, and waited again.

"Pet-roff——"

"Ivan Stepanovitch Petroff——" she pronounced, gathering up all the fragments of his name, and added : "And what is your address ? "

"Never mind ! " he exclaimed suddenly. "I'll come back for it myself. But please give me a receipt."

Once in the street, Petroff drew out the receipt and read under the firm's name : "per Anna Svetloff." That was what he wanted the receipt for ; he was afraid she would sign only her initials.

That was the worst about taking a fancy to a thing : in the end you wanted it. He now had his samovar. But how could he tell when he unwarily entered the shop that day that his small innocent fancy would breed a greater, an infinitely more difficult one of satisfaction, since merely to admire there was need of something more than the stopping before the shop-window ; one had to go into the shop itself ; moreover, one must go in to buy something. So Petroff began to frequent that shop on one pretext or another. The second time he went to the shop he bought a mouse-trap, though he already had three lying idle on the rummage-heap in the attic. On his third visit he bought a fishing-rod : goodness alone knew what he was going to fish for : all the fishing he'd ever done had been in dreams. His next venture was a tin-opener. He went on buying these things, and as a result of his otherwise useless purchases had achieved the privilege of calling her familiarly, "Anna Pavlovna."

One day a strong impulse urged Petroff towards Anna Pavlovna. It was the same impulse, only ten thousand times stronger, that finally drove him to possess the samovar. Had it been one of those devilishly clever Frenchmen we hear of who had been thus in love, he would have asked the object of his affections out for a walk and deftly manœuvred her towards a fashionable

dressmaking establishment, where pausing and allowing her eyes to fall on the nice feminine things in the shop-window, until her mouth had begun to water, he would have remarked with discreet casualness : " What do you say, dear, to going in and ordering a trousseau ? " Then there is the case of the Spaniard, who put the question with equal effectiveness : " Shall you and I put our clothes in the same trunk and go on a long journey together ? " Unfortunately our Ivan Petroff was not up to these clever French and Spanish tricks. He was a simple Russian, with honest, if sometimes uncouth ways ; nevertheless, with an eye, as it has already been observed, for the little niceties of life. He had not forgotten how nice she had looked behind the samovar, how one had set the other off, how much they seemed like two companion pieces of a set. Such was the picture she evoked, a picture which with the passing of days had grown tense and luminous, almost too large for the frame of his mind, which it threatened to split. So, having decided to speak to her, he approached her thus :

" Anna Pavlovna, you remember the samovar I bought of you ? "

" Why shouldn't I remember it ? It was such a nice one. I was quite sorry to part with it. "

" That's just what I came to talk to you about. You needn't be parted from it. I came to ask you if you wouldn't come and pour tea for me ?—I mean for always——"

There was a silence. Petroff was afraid that she would say that she had already promised to pour tea for someone else. She looked serious for a while, then burst out laughing.

" What an original way you have of putting it, Ivan Stepanitch ! Who could resist it ? Of course, I'll come and pour tea for you. But tell me, Ivan Stepanitch, what did you buy a mouse-trap for—and a fishing-rod—and a bird-cage—and a monkey-wrench—and a tin-opener—and a—You didn't really want any of those things, did you ? "

Petroff smiled assent shyly.

" Remember the day you bought the bird-cage ? " asked Anna Pavlovna, and he nodding in the affirmative she went on : " You were going to say something to me that day, weren't you ? " He again nodding in the affirmative she continued : " Yes, I watched you, Ivan Stepanitch. I watched you, as you looked through the wires of the cage. You were looking at me. You said nothing,

But your eyes gave you away. You've got fine eyes, Ivan Stepanitch. Come nearer, Ivan Stepanitch——" And Ivan Stepanitch drawing nearer, she impulsively seized his head between her hands and kissed his eyes. "Don't you try," she said, laughing, "to fool a woman so long as you have those eyes. Of course, I'll come and pour tea for you!"

And so Ivan Stepanovitch took her home to pour tea for him. For a full year Anna Pavlovna poured tea for her Ivan. Then, one day she fell ill, and for days lay in a delirium, with intervals of calm. During one of these, the nurse, all in white, poured out a cup of tea for her patient: for the samovar, on the insistent demands of the patient, was now in the sick-room. Anna Pavlovna watched the nurse pouring out tea, and imagined that the white figure was Death.

"No, no!" she cried, as the white figure approached her with a cup of tea. "Take it away! Don't make me drink it! I don't want to die! No, no—not just yet!"

## II

Ivan Petroff's custom since becoming a widower—so our story began, you will remember—was to leave the lumber-yard, of which he was the owner, precisely at four o'clock each day, when he would wend his way home, where a hot samovar awaited him. Neighbours, on seeing him pass by, regulated their clocks by him (as the saying goes), so punctual were his goings and comings. Punctuality is not natural to a Russian, but Petroff was punctual. It is not to be wondered at, then, that he was regarded as a queer sort. Not that Petroff was business-like. Far from it. His punctuality was rather the result of apathy become mechanical. He had been like that since his wife died. That had happened a year ago.

A samovar has much to answer for in Russian life. If it were not for samovars there might not be any Russian novels. This particular samovar had much to answer for in Petroff's life. The first day that he was unfaithful to it was the day that began Petroff's second adventure.

On leaving the lumber-yard that day, Ivan Petroff walked as usual as far as the church, where the road forked into two. As usual, he took off his hat and crossed himself. Then he did

something unusual. Instead of taking the road to the right, as was his habit of over a year, he turned into the road to the left. An instant before he had no idea of turning to the left. He had no idea why he had turned into the road to the left. It was as if a magnet which had formerly drawn him to the right had now changed its position in the road to the left. Petroff himself had hardly realised what he had done until he felt a slap on his back and heard a familiar voice say :

" And what brings you this way, Ivan Stepanitch ? "

Ivan Petroff looked at his questioner in a confused way and stammered :

" I ?—I ? I'm just taking a walk ! "

Petroff blushed. He could not lie gracefully. All the same, if he had wished to tell the truth, he could not have said just what took him that way and not the other way. But he felt a strong consciousness of unfaithfulness, a desire to get away from his own beloved samovar, which never ceased to remind him of the dear one, who, daily, for a whole year, had poured him tea out of it.

At the next turn of the road was the inn, and thither he guiltily directed his footsteps, as in the old days, before he had married Anna Pavlovna.

He paid but slight attention to the sleigh at the door, nor to the woman getting out of it all wrapped in furs.

" Well, well, you haven't honoured us with your company for a long while," said the proprietor, greeting his former patron heartily.

" A *samovarchik* (a little samovar), please ! " said Petroff with an embarrassed air, " and how are you, Pavel Timofeyevitch ? "

A little samovar was brought, containing a mere fifteen tumblers, a small matter for a Russian, and our Ivan Petroff, removing his fur overcoat and his high fur cap, and undoing his caftan, sat down before the tea urn. Before pouring out the tea he gulped down a small vodka as a kind of appetiser.

In the Russian manner he put a small lump of sugar in his mouth and sipped the tea through it. He was drinking his third tumbler, when a woman, the same he had casually noted getting out of the sleigh, entered the inn. She surveyed the room, for an instant fixed Petroff with her eyes, and sat down at a table across the room, facing him. Apparently she was staying there, for she did not have her furs with her. She also ordered a small samovar.

All of a sudden Petroff felt strongly conscious of the woman's presence, and on raising his eyes found hers fixed on his. And helplessly he felt his soul wrenched from his body with a kind of violence, drawn by the unfathomable power of those eyes. Then she relinquished his soul and allowed it to drift back, now hers.

There was something about that woman which reminded him, indefinitely at first, of his lamented wife. There was, indeed, some similarity in their features, but the stranger's eyes were larger, more widely parted, and had a sense of knowledge and worldliness which the others did not possess, and this was an added attraction. At all events the superficial resemblance was in itself sufficiently startling to cause a flutter, and more than a flutter, in Ivan's heart, as his eyes, involuntarily, continued to drift in her direction, always to find her eyes responding with an intimate wonderment, as if to say: "I surely have seen you somewhere before? But whether I have seen you or not does not matter. I know you!"

In short, they were all-knowing eyes, and he felt them sounding him to the innermost depths of his being. Intent as that look was, it was not a stare, for there was no hardness in it; indeed, it had all the tremulous modulation of pliant violin music stealing into one's heart without one knowing how. An inner fluid warmth, such as he had not remembered since his first courting of Anna and surely not to be ascribed to tea, was stealing through Petroff and flooding him. It began to radiate from his moistened eyes and to wander in vapoury, lit-up clouds, which seemed to interpose themselves between him and the woman, so that he saw her as through a filmy mist. Such havoc can a woman play with a man's soul!

Stranger still, Petroff felt that the woman was undergoing a not unsimilar emotion. More than once, prodded by an inexplicable impulse, he was on the point of rising and asking her to join him at his samovar, but Petroff was a very shy man, and he could not screw up his courage to commit a possible effrontery to the unknown woman for whom, at first sight, he had contracted so tender a regard.

After two hours, poor Petroff paid the waiter and reluctantly took his departure. He felt the woman's eyes follow him until he had passed through the door, and immediately formed a mental resolution;

"I shall be here to-morrow at the same time. Deuce take it, I wish I had spoken to her!"

It would be as hard to say why Petroff made this sudden resolution as it would be to say what drew him here in the first place. Such was Petroff, such things happened to Petroff. Why inquire further?

At all events, on arriving home, he astonished the already wondering maid, Marusya, by instructing her not to prepare the samovar the next day, so that poor Marusya crossed herself and muttered:

"What's come over master? I hope nothing ill. The Saints preserve him!"

Petroff lay wide awake that night, and a woman's eyes, grey as a sunless sea, long eye-lashes flickering, looked at him and beckoned out of the darkness—it was hard to tell whether to paradise or perdition.

Willingly, it is true, yet helplessly, Petroff at the same hour the next day wended his way towards the inn. He felt sure she would be there, yet feared that she might not. There was no one in the room. He took the seat he had occupied the previous day, ordered a samovar, and waited, waited. At last he heard the sound of a woman's voice, and knew at once it was hers. Palpitating instants became transformed in his heart into hammer-beats. That voice, indeed, though he had not heard it before, matched those eyes well. She was ordering a samovar. She glided into the room with a feline motion, and the brown fur of her long overcoat undulated to the rhythm of her body and might have been integrally a part of her. She sat down in her former seat, and Petroff sat still and rigid in his, a serpent charmed. It was the same as yesterday, and Petroff could not screw up his courage to rise and speak. This time, having consulted her watch, she was the first to rise from the table and, departing, left Petroff a prey to the most agitated emotions.

For three days this little comedy was enacted, and on the fourth Petroff made up his mind to speak, come what will. After the sixth tumbler of tea, Petroff began to curse himself. The charming unknown did not come.

"I've missed my chance, the deuce take it!" he muttered to himself. "That's what comes of being a ninny and putting things off!"

At six o'clock he rose, and with a crestfallen air walked out of the room, feeling like a whipped, hungry dog, his tail between his legs.

"Perhaps to-morrow!" he murmured half-hopefully.

Listlessly he arrived at his own door. Having deposited his hat and coat in the ante-room, he entered the dining-room. He found it lit up and the table set for dinner. He flung himself down on the sofa and gazed towards the table. A singular fact, which had at first escaped his notice, now, quite suddenly, impressed itself upon his consciousness as he scratched his head in astonishment. The table was set for two! He sat up and looked again. There was no mistake. The table was set for two! He had not remembered having asked anyone to dinner. Indeed, he had not asked anyone to dinner since his wife had died.

What was the meaning of this? Petroff sat up and rubbed his eyes. A mood of enchantment held him and prevented him from calling Marusya. There was a temptation to discover the meaning of the illusion, if illusion it was, for himself. A thought slowly struggled in his simple brain, a sluggish, yet a wild thought. But that was impossible—simply impossible. He was a fool and a simpleton to entertain such a thought. His blood began to tingle through his veins hotly; afterwards, from head to foot, he trembled with the ague. He wondered: was he ill, was fever setting in, or had the woman cast an evil spell upon him? And he remembered that he hadn't slept three nights. He had better have Marusya call a doctor. What was the good of a doctor? There was no remedy against a woman's eyes. There they were, even at that instant, between the half-parted draperies in the doorway, looking at him, penetrating him to the bottom of his soul.

She was real as life, and it was the first time that he had seen her hatless, showing a wealth of brown hair, rich with gold-tinged highlights. It was wound round her head in large, tight, snaky coils, and under her broad, high-arched brows her grave, long-lashed eyes were lapsing into a smile. She appeared to hold the draperies together with an invisible hand, and only her head showed through the opening.

Petroff sat transfixed, unable to move or say a word. He feared that ■ he stirred the vision would vanish.

The smile between the draperies broadened. Then the invisible hand flung aside the draperies, and the figure ran forward and dropped on its knees before Petroff.

"Here am I, Ivan Stepanitch. You have wanted me, and I have come!"

Petroff said nothing. He was dazed and under a spell.

"You did want me, did you not?" she went on, as her hand sought his knee and rested quietly there.

"Yes——" replied Petroff, galvanised by that touch into life. "But how do you know my name? Who are you, and where do you come from?"

"Don't ask questions, Ivan Stepanitch. But if you'd like to know, a little bird told me. As for my name, call me Maria Feodorovna. Aren't you glad I have come?"

Petroff shyly put his hands on her shoulders.

"I'm real enough," laughed Maria Feodorovna.

"I am not dreaming?——"

"You may kiss me when you wake up—then we'll have some dinner. I am frightfully hungry. I've asked Marusya to cook something especially nice."

"I have not slept three nights because of you," said Petroff, stroking her hair.

"And you are not going to sleep a fourth," laughed Maria Feodorovna. "Poor Ivan!"

"You don't mean that you are going to leave me," exclaimed Petroff, alarm in his voice.

"No, of course not, you stupid! What I meant was that I have come to stay. You do want me?"

In answer, he seized one of her hands and covered it with kisses.

### III

Who was she? Where had she come from? What had been her past? Ivan never knew. Every time he questioned her, during their lovings, she simply laughed and replied:

"What does it matter, darling? You are happy, aren't you? People who are happy shouldn't ask questions. Just imagine I've dropped down from heaven, and take your happiness. Did I ask questions when I first saw you? I didn't even ask you whether I might come or not. I liked you at first sight, and I

knew that you liked me. That was enough. And so I just came——"

But the male in him, jealous of her past history, was not satisfied, and he importuned her :

" But did you—I mean are you a widow ? Are you—— ? "

She always stopped a question with a kiss and the remonstrance :

" Don't ask questions. Questions bring unhappiness. They are always the beginning of all trouble."

Three months they lived as man and wife, and were happy together. She turned a deaf ear to his repeated proposals of marriage. She placed all such proposals in the category of unnecessary questions.

" There you go again with your questions ! Aren't we happy as we are ? What do you want to marry me for. Besides——"

She always paused there, just as he felt he was on the eve of a revelation which might furnish the key to the mystery of her. But having said, " Besides——" she would scrutinise the eager, questioning face of her lover, and, after a pause, break into a tantalising laugh.

" Never mind, Ivan. It doesn't matter so long as we are happy—It doesn't really matter."

Under her caresses, Petroff would forget everything, to return afterwards to an intense preoccupation with that portentous " Besides." He felt sure that there was much behind that enigmatic word, and his mind was troubled. Had she run away from a husband ? Was she not free to marry him ? He was fiercely in love with Maria Feodorovna, and he thought that if she would only consent ■ marry him, he would secure her for ever. But there was always that " Besides ! "

One evening a strange thing happened. It was winter. There was snow on the ground, but no frost, and the windows were clear. Maria Feodorovna had not drawn the curtains. She and Ivan sat before the samovar, and Maria was pouring out tea. The red-shaded lamp-light cast rich glints on the old curved copper of the samovar and found responsive echoes in the now coppery surfaces of Maria's face.

Maria sat with a preoccupied air, and her eyes were full of mysterious apprehension, which communicated itself to Ivan. He noticed that her hand trembled when she handed him his glass of tea. He knew her to be subject to occult perceptions, which

usually proved to be uncannily accurate. But never before had he seen her in such an intense state of repressed agitation.

It was then that the fearful thing happened. It happened so quickly, so suddenly and so unaccountably. First there was the report of a revolver, instantaneously followed by a crash of window panes ; something hard and sharp struck the samovar ; a tiny jet of water and steam came pouring out of the wounded urn. Maria gave a scream. With quiet presence of mind, Ivan blew out the lamp and forced Maria down to the floor. He felt his way to the cupboard and extracted a revolver, which he kept loaded for any emergency. He then flung himself out of doors and caught sight of a moving faint shadow against the snow, which crunched under the prowler's furtive footfalls.

Petroff fired. The figure began to run. Once or twice it paused to aim a revolver. They kept up a running fire in the half dark. Once the unknown uttered an oath, as of pain, then ran out of the gate. Ivan gave up the pursuit.

He put up the shutters before re-entering the house. On lighting the lamp he found Maria Feodorovna sitting on the floor where he had left her. Her face was ashen pale, and fear had not left her eyes.

He told her what had happened. She quickly recovered her spirits, and restored Ivan's as well. That night she loved Ivan with redoubled ardour.

In the morning there was no sign of her. Only a strange note on her pillow to say that it was better that they should part on a high note of passion than that their love should degenerate into habitual caresses and grey domesticity. How could she say that when he loved her so ?

In his garden, now covered with snow, he discovered a trail of blood, leading to the gateway and beyond. It was left by the prowler of the previous night's encounter.

Later in the day, in the village, men talked of a stranger who came to the district hospital, dripping with blood, wounded, and died there, and before death raved about a woman who had loved him for a space and left him.

Petroff listened, but said nothing. He went home, and, locking the doors, went forth with a knapsack. In the inside pocket of his caftan was a revolver.

## HOLY LAND

By LUDWIG LEWISOHN

Ludwig Lewisohn, born in Berlin, 1883, educated and brought up in America. The most formidable Jewish figure in present-day American literature. Contributing editor of the "New York Nation" since 1924. Author: "The Broken Snare," 1908; "A Night in Alexandria," 1909; "German Style," 1910; "The Modern Drama," 1915; "The Spirit of Modern German Literature," 1916; "The Poets of Modern France," 1918; "The Drama and the Stage," 1922; "Up-Stream: An American Chronicle," 1922; "Don Juan," 1923; "The Creative Life," 1924; "Israel," 1925; "Roman Summer," 1927; "Adam—a dramatic history in prologue, seven scenes and an epilogue," 1929; "Cities and Men," 1929; "Mid-Channel," 1929; "The Memories of Stephen Escott," 1930; "The Case of Mr. Crump, etc.," 1931; "The Golden Vase," 1931; "The Last Days of Shylock," 1931; "Expressions in America," 1932.

Translator of many works from German, including the "Dramatic Works of Gerhart Hauptmann" (seven volumes) and Jacob Wassermann's "The World's Illusion" and "Wedlock." Editor, "A Book of American Prose," 1927.

### I

THE blond man across the table from me, the man with a cheery, knowing squint, gossiped in a mixture of languages about Egyptian politics. Very gently the *Venetia* rolled on her way to Alexandria. The blue Mediterranean sea-line, visible through the port-hole at my left, rose and dipped by but an inch or two. I listened carefully to the blond man. But haphazard, half-articulate sounds farther to my right stole upon me with a winning, teasing familiarity. The blond man became for a moment intent upon his food and I heard the woman's voice, clear now even above a swishing on the deck without:

"I don't think much of *this* chicken, do you, Lee?"

Two thick, bulgy men separated me from the speaker. I had to crane a little. She was frankly middle-aged, tall, thin, wistful—wistful yet positive. She sucked her teeth in a comfortable self-satisfied way at the memory of the real chicken to which she was accustomed at home. Her husband, large, comfortable, fleshy, turned to her a kindly, crinkled, shrewd face.

"We've had worse'n this."

"I'd like to know where!"

"Oh, at a lot o' these places."

His vivid, unimaginative grey eyes met mine. He saw that I understood and grinned a grin of male fellowship. He almost winked as he said to her but, obviously, for me to overhear:

"The drinks are a whole lot better."

She followed his glance and, also for my benefit, gurgled in her genuine though so belated girlishness:

"Why, Lee Merriwether, I'm surprised at you!"

A few minutes later I came upon them on deck. She was resting on her deck-chair, eager even in her reclining position; Merriwether was standing by the railing generously moistening the end of a handsome American cigar. He nodded; Mrs. Merriwether leaned forward.

"I *thought* you were an American!"

In a moment, under his drily humorous, tolerant glance she was telling me about them, about herself. She spurted. ■ wasn't the tourist season. Americans had evidently been few. Since she could speak only English and that, as she said, may be "not so good," she was farnished for communication.

"We're from Albion, Wisconsin. Did you ever hear of it? It's quite a town. Oh yes, we've been all over Europe. London and Paris and Venice. Did you see the churchyard where Grey wrote his elegy? Didn't you just love it? London was crowded. Oh, wasn't it *just*? But the Exposition was dandy!"

"And now," I said, "you're going East too."

She leaned forward; she tucked a wisp of straight, brownish hair back under her Leghorn travelling hat. The wistfulness in her face was more marked now than the positiveness, than the communicativeness.

"I always felt like I wanted to see the places where our Lord lived. We're not so terribly religious." There was a queer little apology in her voice. She meant, of course, that they weren't bigoted and rancorous. But I knew that from the way she had teased her husband about drinking. "I've always thought——" She stopped. She was articulate enough in her way. But any speech beyond the special formulas of her environment found her shy. I sat down on an unoccupied chair beside her. She looked away from me. "It's like this. We're Congregationalists. But

my father—he's been dead for years and years—he was a Methodist minister. I want to tell you : He was a saint if ever there was one. You know that old hymn : ' There is a green hill far away ' ? " A faint, beautiful emotion came into her eyes. " The way father used to repeat that ! When I was about sixteen father had a charge in a little bit of a town in Southern Wisconsin. We lived right next to the little white church. My, but that was a quiet place. Sunday you didn't hear a sound hardly. Just the bell of the church and maybe a rooster crowing. You know the people in that congregation didn't have much of an education. Of course we've sent our boy and girl—I've got to show you their pictures—up to Madison. But in those days it was different. Well, I want to tell you : My father just told his people about Jesus. You just felt's if you could see Nazareth and Galilee and all the places that our Saviour was in, you know. And somehow . . ." She straightened up and brightened up into her more conventional self. " I've always said that early impressions last longest. Don't you think so yourself ? My, but it's a grand day ! "

Merriwether had turned around. He stood facing us with his broad, crinkly indulgent smile.

" Tell you a secret about the wife. The ladies got up some sort of a club in Albion a couple o' years ago. She's quite a leader in it. Well, they read papers there about authors, say, or the trips they've been on. So the wife sort of figured out that if we took this trip, she'd certainly have an original subject ! " He laughed a merry but subterranean kind of laugh—an inward chuckle. She was accustomed to his teasing. Her protest was a formula : " Why, Lee Merriwether, how can you say that ! "

I got up and joined him at the railing. He rolled his cigar comfortably. His tone was intimate—man to man.

" We had a pretty good year up our way. I'm in the contracting business 'n connected with the First National of Albion. The farmers had money—all of 'em, seems like. Well, I'd just as soon've gone to Florida or to the Coast. But she"—he nodded towards his wife—" wanted to take this trip. It's been a kind of a dream she's had. Just like she told you. Well, I'm having a good time, all right. They got some mighty fine Scotch down in the smoking-room and they don't hardly charge you nothing for it." He winked at me. " Shall we have a little drink ? "

Merriwether and I, strolling towards the door of the smoking-room, heard her voice with its belated girlishness : " I know what you two are up to, alright ! " Merriwether chuckled. " 'Snot so hard to guess ! "

## II

A Cook's agent met them at Alexandria and I lost sight of them in the turbulent Arab crowd. Alighting from the train in Cairo that evening I thought I glimpsed for a moment a slightly-bewildered face that was Mrs. Merriwether's. But I wasn't sure. They were stopping at Shepheard's, of course, for a week or ten days ; I was hurrying through to make my connection for Palestine at Kantara. The Merriwethers faded from my mind.

It was exactly twelve days later that I came upon them again. They strolled hesitantly into the dining-room of the Allenby Hotel in Jerusalem. There were only a half dozen people in the rather bare room : a long-faced, bronzed old Egyptian merchant and his youngish European wife, a couple of blond, chirpy Englishmen, a well-groomed American Zionist. Mrs. Merriwether saw me at once and fluttered happily, as though in sudden sight of refuge, in my direction.

" Well, did you ever ! " she exclaimed.

Her husband, following closely, grasped my hand with unexpected cordiality. They scarcely waited for my invitation to sit at my table. They were so obviously relieved to find me. We exchanged the inevitable questions. They had arrived only the day before ; they had a guide of whom Mrs. Merriwether " didn't think much." His English was so fast and so unintelligible. I asked them what their impression of the Holy City was. Merriwether said : " Oh, I guess it's all right." His wife looked at me a little wanly. " It's wonderful, wonderful." I looked at her closely. She seemed unaccountably more faded than before. " The light is terrible," she said. I advised smoked glasses. They already had them. There was something pathetic about her, something at once eager and frustrated. " Suppose we take a walk this afternoon," I suggested. With a quite uncharacteristic gesture she put her hand over mine. " Oh, that would be dandy ! " That word " dandy " seemed, in that place, of an innocent weirdness ; it seemed of a strange, remote childlikeness.

My eye happened to fall on the face of the Egyptian merchant. It had suddenly a Pharaonic cruelty and agelessness.

We met, at the appointed hour, in front of the hotel. The Jaffa road was very much alive. We dodged a few carriages on our short walk towards the Jaffa gate of the old city. At the corner I stopped and quietly pointed towards the left where the citadel of Suleiman rises loftily, where the long sublime slopes of the Judean hills begin. Mrs. Merriwether was wide-eyed. But she seemed fascinated, despite herself, by things in the foreground—the Arab café at the corner, a tall, ragged Bedouin on a tiny ass, a group of agile, importunate boot-blacks.

We entered at the Jaffa gate. Mrs. Merriwether and I walked on ahead. Merriwether followed. I guided her down the steps of the uneven, crooked little street; I kept her from being jostled. She seemed frightened. I told her that the Arabs meant nothing by bumping into her. They simply had no sense of orderliness. She glanced shyly into the greasy, open shops, nervously dodged the large wooden platter of a cake-vendor, stared at the magnificently severe faces of two old Galician Jews. I pointed out to her a window in an immemorial arch that spanned the alley. "Look, here you have a symbol of the ancient East. There is something fantastic and humble and arrogant, something mean and yet elevated about this arch, this window." She said nothing. From behind came Merriwether's first remark: "I guess they don't try to clean up much around here."

The Via Dolorosa was fairly empty and still. It was no feast day. It lay forlorn between the blind walls in its alternation of fierce light and sharp, black shadows. A few filthy Arab children, waiting for stray tourists, cried for an alma. Mrs. Merriwether stumbled over the smooth cobble-stones. "This is where our Lord . . ." She panted a bit. I nodded. "Did you imagine it differently?" I asked. "Oh, I don't know." She tried to sound cheerful.

We knocked at the gate of the French convent built over the house of Pontius Pilate. In the cool, little church a French nun with an expressionless face explained in accurate but uneloquent English something of the associations of the spot. In the cool gloom, behind the altar, amid a flat smell of faded flowers, she showed us the ruined façade of the Roman governor's house. The nun disappeared the moment her toneless voice had done its

duty and we were back in the fierce glow of the light. The Merriwethers stood beside me. He was grave and non-committal. Her eyes wandered. "I suppose it's the way you're brought up," she said thoughtfully. There was a genuine gentleness in her tone. "I know, I know we mustn't judge. My father always said so. But do you feel just at home in Catholic Churches?" It was clear, at least, that she didn't. Nor did she feel more comfortable when I took them to the Wall of Wailing where in front of the gigantic and terrible stones a little group of Jews intoned their violent yet austere prayers.

Back at the Allenby she thanked me profusely. "I'm going to rest a while now," she said. "My, but it's hard walking. Tomorrow the guide is going to take us to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and on a donkey-ride around the walls."

"And then?" I asked.

"Oh, we'll see everything here. Then we're going to Bethlehem and Nazareth and Tiberias. Isn't that the way it is, Lee?"

He nodded. His crinkly smile came back and his male confidentiality to me.

"I guess we'll live through it."

### III

My business took me to the North. I saw Haifa glittering through the night from the heights of Carmel and Safed upon its holy hill. Through the thronging hills I drove over the lofty roads to Tiberias. There I heard about the Merriwethers. Mrs. Merriwether's left eyelid had become slightly inflamed. She had seen so many Arabs horribly blind from trachoma that a sort of panic had seized both her and her husband and he had asked whether there was such a thing as a decent doctor in this damned hole. The Jewish hotel-keeper had, of course, taken the Merriwethers to the clinic of the Zionist Medical Service where an English-speaking oculist had reassured them. They had been enormously relieved and grateful. Mr. Merriwether had wrung the doctor's hand. A fee being refused, he had sworn that he would send a cheque to the Zionist headquarters. Mrs. Merriwether had remarked, almost with tears of joy, that some of her *best* friends in Albion were Jews—lovely people, fine citizens. They had then driven off at once.

Since this had happened but a day or two before I thought it possible that I might see them again. And I wanted to see them. I found it hard to formulate the character of my interest in them. A pathos clung to them in my vision of them. To her, at least. He was detached enough from their whole adventure. Indeed, it wasn't his at all. After the manner of American husbands he was trying to please her. He could afford it. So why shouldn't he? But she! A touch of wistful poetry in her heart had brought her here; an aroma of religious romance that had clung to her Wisconsin girlhood of the saint-like father and the still, small, white church amid those Northern fields. And now?

I could have gone back to Haifa but instead I drove to Nazareth. It was late when I reached the Hotel Germania. Yes, their names were in that extraordinary hotel register where people are inscribed from ■ the ends of the earth—from New York and Lebanon, from Teheran and Vienna. So I would see them in the morning.

I went to my small, austere, cell-like room. I was tired and slept. But in a couple of hours I awoke. A wind had risen, a wild, disturbing wind. I threw on a dressing-gown and stood before my arched window. I saw a wall that looked like the oldest wall in all the world. In the wall was a little wooden door and over the door swung a dim, sooty lantern. Behind the wall stood cypresses and their tops swayed in the wind. And the black, swaying tops of those cypresses seemed to sweep against the sky, against the stars, the incomparable stars of Palestine, the low, large, drooping, prophetic stars. Suddenly, from afar, another sound came faintly through the sighing of the wind. The night was cool. Caravans were on foot. The sound was the sound of camel-bells. I went out of my small room into the hall which had great arched, paneless windows through which one could see the roofs of Nazareth and the farther hills. The wind swept through the hall; the sound of the bells came nearer. The caravan came in sight. The tall, grave camels were like shadows. About them and their drivers there was something remote and eternal. The bells clanged.

Suddenly I heard a gasp behind me. I turned and saw Mrs. Merriwether wrapped in a kimono. Her frightened eyes met mine. "Oh, it's you!" There was a sob in her voice. I tried to be matter-of-fact. "It's hard to sleep in this wind. Do you see the caravan?"

She nodded dumbly. Her hands were clasped in front of her holding her kimono together. She stood quite still. Her face was tense. Her eyes were full of a helpless sadness, a childlike confusion.

"What is it?" I asked gently.

She shuddered. "Everything!"

"Didn't you have a pleasant time?"

"Do you know Bethlehem?"

I nodded.

"And the Church of the Nativity? Why, you can't see the stable. It's all over images and things. They're Greek, aren't they? Oh, and the Garden of Gethsemane. They're Russian monks all over it. And everywhere they're Arabs and Jews. Oh, please don't be offended. I don't mean nice Jews like you and the doctor in Tiberias but awful outlandish people. I couldn't imagine our Lord or Peter on Tiberias, on the lake, you know. I can't imagine anything anywhere—anywhere. I'm asking Lee to leave as soon as we can. I want to get away; I want to get out of this terrible dago country."

She sobbed.

"But this is the Holy Land," I said.

She gazed beyond me, beyond the arch of the tall window. She murmured: "'There is a green hill far away!'"

"Well?" I urged her.

There was a wail in her voice. "It's all so different, so, so foreign . . ."

"Jesus was a Jew," I said quietly, "and a son of this ancient land."

She nodded. But her lips were compressed and something of her blithe, competent American positiveness came back to her.

"Of course. But I just somehow don't seem to feel right here. I guess things have changed a lot since our Lord's time. I can think of Him better at home. D'you know what I'm going to do?"

"What?"

"When we get home I'm going to take a trip to Liberty, Wisconsin, that's the place I always remember from the time when I was a girl. And I'll go to the little church in which my father used to preach and have a good prayer and a good cry and try . . ."

she hesitated and finished with a little break in her voice—"and try to find my Saviour again."

She smiled at me pathetically.

"Don't tell Lee how I've carried on. I don't want him to think I'm the least bit disappointed. The trip's been kind of slow for him."

#### IV

I came down to breakfast a few minutes before the Merriwethers. It was a primitive, little dining-room with one long table. At one end of it sat a small, intense Sephardic Jew in a red fez. So I sat down at the opposite end to form a refuge for the Merriwethers. They came in. Lee Merriwether wrung my hand. She looked very wan but smiled bravely.

"I've got a surprise for you," I said. She winced. But I smiled at her reassuringly. "I bet you haven't had any good oatmeal for breakfast in a long time."

"I'll say we haven't!" Merriwether grunted. "Say, d'you remember that stuff they called 'porridge' on the *Venetia*?"

"Wait," I said. "The inn-keeper here is a German and he cooks the most delicious oatmeal. I've ordered it and cream too."

The breakfast was brought in.

"I tell you," said Lee Merriwether, "we know how to live in America. I don't care what anybody says. I'll be glad to get back to the good old U.S.A."

His wife laid a hand on his strong arm.

"So will I, Lee, so will I. . . ."

## THE FAT OF THE LAND

*By ANZIA YRZIEWSKA*

Anzia Yezierska, born 1886, in Poland. Self-educated. Went to America in 1901, worked in factories, sweat-shops and as cook in private families. Began writing short stories of East Side life in 1918. Published 1919 "Hungry Hearts" (filmed 1920), "Bread Givers," "All I Could ever Be," and other novels and volumes of short stories. Her background of personal experience in the sweat-shops and tenements of the New York East Side, and her passionate sincerity have made her the outstanding writer of Jewish immigrant life in America. The following story is taken from "Hungry Hearts."

IN an air-shaft so narrow that you could touch the next wall with your bare hands, Hanneh Breineh leaned out and knocked on her neighbour's window.

"Can you loan me your wash-boiler for the clothes?" she called.

Mrs. Pelz threw up the sash.

"The boiler? What's the matter with yours again? Didn't you tell me you had it fixed already last week?"

"A black year on him the robber, the way he fixed it! If you have no luck in the world, then it's better not to live. There I spent out fifteen cents to stop up one hole, and it runs out another. How I ate out my gall bargaining with him he should let it down to fifteen cents! He wanted yet a quarter, the swindler. Got-tuniu! My bitter heart on him for every penny he took from me for nothing."

"You got to watch all those swindlers, or they'll steal the whites out of your eyes," admonished Mrs. Pelz. "You should have tried out your boiler before you paid him. Wait a minute till I empty out my dirty clothes in a pillow case; then I'll hand it to you."

Mrs. Pelz returned with the boiler and tried to hand it across to Hanneh Breineh, but the soap-box refrigerator on the window-sill was in the way.

"You got to come in for the boiler yourself," said Mrs. Pelz.

"Wait only till I tie my Sammy on to the high-chair he shouldn't fall on me again. He's so wild that ropes won't hold him."

Hanneh Breineh tied the child in the chair, stuck a pacifier in his mouth, and went in to her neighbour. As she took the boiler Mrs. Pelz said :

"Do you know Mrs. Melker ordered fifty pounds of chicken for her daughter's wedding? And such grand chickens! Shining like gold! My heart melted in me just looking at the flowing fatness of those chickens."

Hanneh Breineh smacked her thin, dry lips, a hungry gleam in her sunken eyes.

"Fifty pounds!" she gasped. "It ain't possible. How do you know?"

"I heard her with my own ears. I saw them with my own eyes. And she said she will chop up the chicken's livers with onions and eggs for an appetiser, and then she will buy twenty-five pounds of fish, and cook it sweet and sour with raisins, and she said she will bake all her shtrudels on pure chicken fat."

"Some people work themselves up in the world," sighed Hanneh Breineh. "For them is America flowing with milk and honey. In Savel Mrs. Melker used to get shrivelled up from hunger. She and her children used to live on potato-peelings and crusts of dry bread picked out from the barrels; and in America she lives to eat chicken, and apple shtrudels soaking in fat."

"The world is a wheel always turning," philosophised Mrs. Pelz. "Those who were high go down low, and those who've been low go up higher. Who will believe me here in America that in Poland I was a cook in a banker's house? I handled ducks and geese every day. I used to bake coffee cake with cream so thick you could cut it with a knife."

"And do you think I was a nobody in Poland?" broke in Hanneh Breineh, tears welling in her eyes as the memories of the past rushed over her. "But what's the use of talking? In America money is everything. Who cares who my father or grandfather was in Poland? Without money I'm a living dead one. My head dries out worrying how to get for the children the eating a penny cheaper."

Mrs. Pelz wagged her head, a gnawing envy contracting her features.

"Mrs. Melker had it good from the day she came," she said

begrudgingly. "Right away she sent all her children to the factory, and she began to cook meat for dinner every day. She and her children have eggs and buttered rolls for breakfast each morning like millionaires."

A sudden fall and a baby's scream, and the boiler dropped from Hanneh Breineh's hands as she rushed into her kitchen, Mrs. Pelz after her. They found the high-chair turned on top of the baby.

"Gewalt! Save me! Run for a doctor!" cried Hanneh Breineh, as she dragged the child from under the high-chair. "He's killed! He's killed! My only child, my precious lamb!" she shrieked as she ran back and forth with the screaming infant.

Mrs. Pelz snatched little Sammy from the mother's hands.

"Meshugneh! What are you running around like a crazy, frightening the child? Let me see. Let me tend to him. He ain't killed yet." She hastened to the sink to wash the child's face, and discovered a swelling lump on his forehead. "Have you got a quarter in your house?" she asked.

"Yes, I got one," replied Hanneh Breineh, climbing on a chair. "I got to keep it on a high shelf where the children can't get it."

Mrs. Pelz seized the quarter Hanneh Breineh handed down to her.

"Now pull your left eyelid three times while I'm pressing the quarter, and you'll see the swelling go down."

Hanneh Breineh took the child again in her arms, shaking and cooing over it and caressing it.

"Ah-ah-ah, Sammy! Ah-ah-ah-ah, little lamb! Ah-ah-ah, little bird! Ah-ah-ah-ah, precious heart! Oh, you saved my life; I thought he was killed," gasped Hanneh Breineh, turning to Mrs. Pelz. "Oi-i!" she sighed, "a mother's heart! Always in fear over her children. The minute anything happens to them all life goes out of me. I lose my head and I don't know where I am any more."

"No wonder the child fell," admonished Mrs. Pelz. "You should have a red ribbon or red beads on his neck to keep away the evil eye. Wait. I got something in my machine-drawer."

Mrs. Pelz returned, bringing the boiler and a red string, which she tied about the child's neck while the mother proceeded to fill the boiler.

A little later Hanneh Breineh again came into Mrs. Pelz's

kitchen, holding Sammy in one arm and in the other an apronful of potatoes. Putting the child down on the floor, she seated herself on the unmade kitchen bed and begun to peel the potatoes in her apron.

"Woe ■ me!" sobbed Hanneh Breineh. "To my bitter luck there ain't no end. With all my other troubles, the stove got broke. I lighted the fire to boil the clothes, and it's to get choked with smoke. I paid the rent only a week ago, and the agent don't want ■ fix it. A thunder should strike him! He only comes for the rent, and if anything has to be fixed, then he don't want ■ hear nothing.

"Why comes it to me so hard?" went on Hanneh Breineh, the tears streaming down her cheeks. "I can't stand it no more. I came into you for a minute to run away from my troubles. It's only when I sit myself down to peel potatoes or nurse the baby that I take time to draw a breath, and beg only for death."

Mrs. Pelz, accustomed to Hanneh Breineh's bitter outbursts, continued her scrubbing.

"Ut!" exclaimed Hanneh Breineh, irritated at her neighbour's silence, "what are you tearing up the world with your cleaning? What's the use to clean up when everything only gets dirty again?"

"I got to shine up my house for the holidays."

"You've got it so good nothing lays on your mind but to clean your house. Look on this little bloodsucker," said Hanneh Breineh, pointing to the wizened child, made prematurely solemn from starvation and neglect. "Could anybody keep that brat clean? I wash him one minute, and he is dirty the minute after." Little Sammy grew frightened and began to cry. "Shut up!" ordered the mother, picking up the child to nurse it again. "Can't you see me take a rest for a minute?"

The hungry child began to cry at the top of its weakened lungs.

"Na, na, you glutton." Hanneh Breineh took out a dirty pacifier from her pocket and stuffed it into the baby's mouth. The grave, pasty-faced infant shrank into a panic of fear, and chewed the nipple nervously, clinging to it with both his thin little hands.

"For what did I need yet the sixth one?" groaned Hanneh Breineh, turning to Mrs. Pelz. "Wasn't it enough five mouths to feed? ■ I didn't have this child on my neck, I could turn myself around and earn a few cents." She wrung her hands in a passion of

despair. "Gottuniu! The earth should only take it before it grows up!"

"Shah! Shah!" reproved Mrs. Pelz. "Pity yourself on the child. Let it grow up already so long as it is here. See how frightened it looks on you." Mrs. Pelz took the child in her arms and petted it. "The poor little lamb! What did it done you should hate it so?"

Hanneh Breineh pushed Mrs. Pelz away from her.

"To whom can I open the wounds of my heart?" she moaned.

"Nobody has pity on me. You don't believe me, nobody believes me until I'll fall down like a horse in the middle of the street. Oi weh! Mine life is so black for my eyes! Some mothers got luck. A child gets run over by a car, some fall from a window, some burn themselves up with a match, some get choked with diphtheria; but no death takes mine away."

"God from the world, stop cursing!" admonished Mrs. Pelz. "What do you want from the poor children? Is it their fault that their father makes small wages? Why do you let it all out on them?" Mrs. Pelz sat down beside Hannah Breineh. "Wait only till your children get old enough to go to the shop and earn money," she consoled. "Push only through those few years while they are yet small; your sun will begin to shine; you will live on the fat of the land when they begin to bring you in the wages each week."

Hanneh Breineh refused to be comforted.

"Till they are old enough to go to the shop and earn money they'll eat the head off my bones," she wailed. "If you only knew the fights I got by each meal. Maybe I gave Abe a bigger piece of bread than Fanny. Maybe Fanny got a little more soup in her plate than Jake. Eating is dearer than diamonds. Potatoes went up a cent on a pound, and milk is only for millionaires. And once a week, when I buy a little meat for the Sabbath, the butcher weighs it for me like gold, with all the bones in it. When I come to lay the meat out on a plate and divide it up, there ain't nothing to it but bones. Before, he used to throw me in a piece of fat extra or a piece of lung, but now you got to pay for everything, even for a bone to the soup."

"Never mind; you'll yet come out from all your troubles. Just as soon as your children get old enough to get their working papers the more children you got the more money you'll have."

"Why should I fool myself with the false shine of hope? Don't I know it's already my black luck not to have it good in this world? Do you think American children will right away give everything they earn to their mother?"

"I know what ■ with you the matter," said Mrs. Pelz. "You didn't eat yet to-day. When it is empty in the stomach, the whole world looks black. Come, only let me give you something good to taste in the mouth; that will freshen you up." Mrs. Pelz went to the cupboard and brought out the saucepan of gefilte fish that she had cooked for dinner and placed it on the table in front of Hanneh Breineh. "Give a taste my fish," she said taking one slice on a spoon, and handing it to Hanneh Breineh with a piece of bread. "I wouldn't give it to you on a plate because I just cleaned up my house, and I don't want to dirty up more dishes."

"What, am I a stranger you should have to serve me on a plate yet?" cried Hanneh Breineh, snatching the fish in her trembling fingers.

"Oj weh! How it melts through all the bones!" she exclaimed brightening as she ate. "May it be for good luck to us all!" she exulted, waving aloft the last precious bite.

Mrs. Pelz was so flattered that she even ladled up a spoonful of gravy.

"There is a bit of onion and carrot in it," she said, as she handed it to her neighbour.

Hanneh Breineh sipped the gravy drop by drop, like a connoisseur sipping wine.

"Ah-h-h! A taste of that gravy lifts me up to heaven!" As she disposed leisurely of the slice of carrot and onion she relaxed and expanded and even grew jovial. "Let us wish all our troubles on the Russian Czar! Let him burst with our worries for rent! Let him get shrivelled with our hunger for bread! Let his eyes dry out of his head looking for work!"

"Shah! I'm forgetting from everything," she exclaimed, jumping up. "It must be eleven or soon twelve, and my children will be right away from school and fall on me like a pack of wild wolves. I better quick run to the market and see what cheaper I can get for a quarter."

Because of the lateness of her coming, the stale bread at the nearest bakeshop was sold out, and Hanneh Breineh had to trudge

from shop to shop in search of the usual bargain, and spent nearly an hour to save two cents.

In the meantime the children returned from school, and, finding the door locked, climbed through the fire-escape, and entered the house through the window. Seeing nothing on the table, they rushed to the stove. Abe pulled a steaming potato out of the boiling pot, and so scalded his fingers that the potato fell to the floor; whereupon the three others pounced upon it.

"It was my potato," cried Abe, blowing his burned fingers, while with the other hand and his foot he cuffed and kicked the three who were struggling on the floor. A wild fight ensued, and the potato was smashed under Abe's foot amid shouts and screams. Hanneh Breineh, on the stairs heard the noise of her famished brood, and topped their cries with curses and invectives.

"They are here already, the savages! They are here already to shorten my life! They hear you all over the hall, in all the houses around."

The children, disregarding her words, pounced on her market-basket, shouting ravenously: "Mamma, I'm hungry! What more you got to eat?"

They tore the bread and herring out of Hanneh Breineh's basket and devoured it in starved savagery, clamouring for more.

"Murderers!" screamed Hanneh Breineh, goaded beyond endurance. "What are you tearing from me my flesh? From where should I steal to give you more? Here I had already a pot of potatoes and a whole loaf of bread and two herrings, and you swallowed it down in the wink of an eye. I have to have Rockefeller's millions to fill your stomachs."

All at once Hanneh Breineh became aware that Benny was missing. "Oi weh!" she burst out, wringing her hands in a new wave of woe, "where is Benny? Didn't he come home yet from school?"

She ran out into the hall, opened the grime-coated window, and looked up and down the street; but Benny was nowhere in sight.

"Abe, Jake, Fanny, quick, find Benny!" entreated Hanneh Breineh, as she rushed back into the kitchen. But the children, anxious to snatch a few minutes' play before the school-call, dodged past her and hurried out.

With the baby on her arm, Hanneh Breineh hastened to the kindergarten.

"Why are you keeping Benny here so long?" she shouted at the teacher as she flung open the door. "If you had my bitter heart, you would send him home long ago and not wait till I got to come for him."

The teacher turned calmly and consulted her record cards.

"Benny Safron? He wasn't present this morning."

"Not here?" shrieked Hanneh Breineh. "I pushed him out myself he should go. The children didn't want to take him, and I had no time. Woe is me! Where is my child?" She began pulling her hair and beating her breast as she ran into the street.

Mrs. Pelz was busy at a push-cart, picking over some spotted apples, when she heard the clamour of an approaching crowd. A block off she recognised Hanneh Breineh, her hair dishevelled, her clothes awry, running toward her with her yelling baby in her arms, the crowd following.

"Friend mine," cried Hanneh Breineh, falling on Mrs. Pelz's neck, "I lost my Benny, the best child of all my children." Tears streamed down her red, swollen eyes as she sobbed. "Benny! mine heart, mine life! Oi-i-i!"

Mrs. Pelz took the frightened baby out of the mother's arms.

"Still yourself a little! See how you're frightening your child."

"Woe to me! Where is my Benny? Maybe he's killed already by a car. Maybe he fainted away from hunger. He didn't eat nothing all day long. Gottuniu! Pity yourself on me."

She lifted her hands full of tragic entreaty.

"People, my child! Get me my child! I'll go crazy out of my head! Get me my child, or I'll take poison before your eyes!"

"Still yourself a little!" pleaded Mrs. Pelz.

"Talk not to me!" cried Hannah Breineh, wringing her hands. "You're having all your children. I lost mine. Every good luck comes to other people. But I didn't live yet to see a good day in my life. Mine only joy, mine Benny, is lost away from me."

The crowd followed Hanneh Breineh as she wailed through the streets, leaning on Mrs. Pelz. By the time she returned to her house the children were back from school; but seeing that Benny was not there, she chased them out in the street crying:

"Out of here, you robbers, gluttons! Go find Benny!" Hanneh Breineh crumpled into a chair in utter prostration. "Oi weh! He's lost! Mine life; my little bird; mine only joy!"

How many nights I spent nursing him when he had the measles ! And all that I suffered for weeks and months when he had the whooping cough ! How the eyes went out of my head till I learned him how to walk, till I learned him how to talk ! And such a smart child ! If I lost all the others, it wouldn't tear me so by the heart."

She worked herself up into such an hysteria, crying and tearing her hair, and hitting her head with her knuckles, that at last she fell into a faint. It took some time before Mrs. Pelz, with the aid of neighbours, revived her.

"Benny, mine angel !" she moaned as she opened her eyes.

Just then a policeman came in with the lost Benny.

"Na, na, here you got him already !" said Mrs. Pelz. "Why did you carry on so for nothing ? Why did you tear up the world like a crazy ?"

The child's face was streaked with tears as he cowered, frightened and forlorn. Hanneh Breineh sprang toward him, slapping his cheeks, boxing his ears, before the neighbours could rescue him from her.

"Woe on your head !" cried the mother. "Where did you lost yourself ? Ain't I got enough worries on my head than to go around looking for you ? I didn't have yet a minute's peace from that child since he was born !"

"See a crazy mother !" remonstrated Mrs. Pelz, rescuing Benny from another beating. "Such a mouth ! With one breath she blesses him when he is lost, and with the other breath she curses him when he is found."

Hanneh Breineh took from the window-sill a piece of herring covered with swarming flies, and putting it on a slice of dry bread, she filled a cup of tea that had been stewing all day, and dragged Benny over to the table to eat.

But the child, choking with tears, was unable to touch the food.

"Go eat !" commanded Hanneh Breineh. "Eat and choke yourself eating !"

"Maybe she won't remember me no more. Maybe the servant won't let me in," thought Mrs. Pelz, as she walked by the brown-stone house on Eighty-Fourth Street where she had been told Hanneh Breineh now lived. At last she summoned up enough

courage ■ climb the steps. She was all out of breath as she rang the bell with trembling fingers. "Oi weh! Even the outside smells riches and plenty! Such curtains! And shades on all windows like by millionaires! Twenty years ago she used to eat from the pot to the hand, and now she lives in such a palace."

A whiff of steam-heated warmth swept over Mrs. Pelz as the door opened, and she saw her old friend of the tenements dressed in silk and diamonds like a being from another world.

"Mrs. Pelz, is it you!" cried Hanneh Breineh overjoyed at the sight of her former neighbour. "Come right in. Since when are you back in New York?"

"We came last week," mumbled Mrs. Pelz, as she was led into a richly carpeted reception-room.

"Make yourself comfortable. Take off your shawl," urged Hanneh Breineh.

But Mrs. Pelz only drew her shawl more tightly around her, a keen sense of her poverty gripping her as she gazed abashed by the luxurious wealth that shone from every corner.

"This shawl covers up my rags," she said, trying to hide her shabby sweater.

"I'll tell you what; come right into the kitchen," suggested Hanneh Breineh. "The servant is away for this afternoon, and we can feel more comfortable there. I can breathe like a free person in my kitchen when the girl has her day out."

Mrs. Pelz glanced about her in an excited daze. Never in her life had she seen anything so wonderful as a white-tiled kitchen, with its glistening porcelain sink and the aluminium pots and pans that shone like silver.

"Where are you staying now?" asked Hanneh Breineh, as she pinned an apron over her silk dress.

"I moved back to Delancey Street, where we used to live," replied Mrs. Pelz, as she seated herself cautiously in a white enamelled chair.

"Oi weh! What grand times we had in that old house when we were neighbours!" sighed Hanneh Breineh, looking at her old friend with misty eyes.

"You still think on Delancey Street? Haven't you more high-class neighbours uptown here?"

"A good neighbour is not to be found every day," deplored Hanneh Breineh. "Uptown here, where each lives in his own

house, nobody cares ■ the person next door ■ dying or going crazy from loneliness. It ain't anything like we used to have it in Delancey Street, when we could walk into one another's rooms without knocking, and borrowing a pinch of salt or a pot to cook in."

Hanneh Breineh went over to the pantry-shelf.

"We are going to have a bite right here on the kitchen-table like on Delancey Street. So long there's no servant to watch us we can eat what we please."

"Oi! How it waters my mouth with appetite, the smell of the herring and the onion!" chuckled Mrs. Pelz, sniffing the welcome odours with greedy pleasure.

Hanneh Breineh pulled a dish-towel from the rack and threw one end of it to Mrs. Pelz.

"So long there's no servant around, we can use this together for a napkin. It's dirty anyhow. How it freshens my heart to see you!" she rejoiced as she poured out her tea into a saucer. "If you would only know how I used to beg my daughter to write for me a letter to you; but these American children, what is to them a mother's feelings?"

"What are you talking!" cried Mrs. Pelz. "The whole world rings with you and your children. Everybody is envying you. Tell me how you began your luck?"

"You heard how my husband died with consumption," replied Hanneh Breineh. "The five hundred dollars lodge money gave me the first lift in life, and I opened a little grocery store. Then my son Abe married himself to a girl with a thousand dollars. That started him in business, and now he has the biggest shirt-waist factory in West Twenty-Ninth Street."

"Yes, I heard your son had a factory." Mrs. Pelz hesitated and stammered; "I'll tell you the truth. What I came to ask you—I thought maybe you would beg your son Abe if he could give my husband a job."

"Why not?" said Hanneh Breineh. "He keeps more than five hundred hands. I'll ask him if he should take in Mr. Pelz."

"Long years on you, Hanneh Breineh. You'll save my life if you could only help my husband get work."

"Of course my son will help him. All my children like to do good. My daughter Fanny is a milliner in Fifth Avenue, and she takes in the poorest girls in her shop and even pays them sometimes while they learn the trade." Hanneh Breineh's face lit up, and her

chest filled with pride as she enumerated the successes of her children. "And my son Benny he wrote a play on Broadway and he gave away more than a hundred tickets free for the first night."

"Benny? The one who used to get lost from home all the time? You always did love that child more than all the rest. And what is Sammy your baby doing?"

"He ain't a baby no longer. He goes to college and quarterback the football team. They can't get along without him."

"And my son Jake, I nearly forgot him. He began collecting rent in Delancey Street, and now he is boss of renting the swellest apartment-houses in Riverside Drive."

"What did I tell you? In America children are like money in the bank," purred Mrs. Pelz, as she pinched and patted Hanneh Breineh's silk sleeve. "Oi web! How it shines from you! You ought to kiss the air and dance for joy and happiness. It is such a bitter frost outside; a pail of coal is so dear, and you got it so wirm with steam heat. I had to pawn my feather bed to have enough for the rent, and you are rolling in money."

"Yes, I got it good in some ways, but money ain't everything," sighed Hanneh Breineh.

"You ain't yet satisfied?"

"But here I got no friends," complained Hanneh Breineh.

"Friends?" queried Mrs. Pelz. "What greater friend is there on earth than the dollar?"

"Oi! Mrs. Pelz; if you could only look into my heart! I'm so choked up! You know they say a cow has a long tongue, but can't talk." Hanneh Breineh shook her head wistfully, and her eyes filmed with inward brooding. "My children give me everything from the best. When I was sick, they got me a nurse by day and one by night. They bought me the best wine. If I asked for doves' milk, they would buy it for me; but—but—I can't talk myself out in their language. They want to make me over for an American lady, and I'm different." Tears cut their way under her eyelids with a pricking pain as she went on: "When I was poor, I was free, and could holler and do what I like in my own house. Here I got to lie still like a mouse under a broom. Between living up to my Fifth Avenue daughter and keeping up with the servants, I am like a sinner in the next world that is thrown from one hell to another." The doorbell rang, and Hanneh Breineh jumped up with a start.

"Oi weh ! It must be the servant back already ! " she exclaimed, as she tore off her apron. " Oi weh ! Let's quickly put the dishes together in a dish-pan. If she sees I eat on the kitchen table, she will look on me like the dirt under her feet."

Mrs. Pelz seized her shawl in haste.

" I better run home quick in my rags before your servant sees me."

" I'll speak to Abe about the job," said Hanneh Breineh, as she pushed a bill into the hand of Mrs. Pelz, who edged out as the servant entered.

" I'm having fried potato lotkes special for you, Benny," said Hanneh Breineh, as the children gathered about the table for the family dinner given in honour of Benny's success with his new play. " Do you remember how you used to lick the fingers from them ? "

" Oh, mother ! " reproved Fanny. " Any one hearing you would think we were still in the push-cart district."

" Stop your nagging, sis, and let Ma alone," commanded Benny, patting his mother's arm affectionately. " I'm home only once a month. Let her feed me what she pleases. My stomach is bomb-proof."

" Do I hear that the President is coming to your play ? " said Abe, as he stuffed a napkin over his diamond-studded shirt-front.

" Why shouldn't he come ? " returned Benny. " The critics say it's the greatest antidote for the race hatred created by the war. If you want to know, he is coming to-night ; and what's more, our box is next to the President's."

" Nu, mamme," sallied Jake, " did you ever dream in Delancey Street that we should rub sleeves with the President ? "

" I always said that Benny had more head than the rest of you," replied the mother.

As the laughter died away, Jake went on :

" Honour you are getting plenty ; but how much mezummen does this play bring you ? Can I invest any of it in real estate for you ? "

" I'm getting ten per cent. royalties of the gross receipts," replied the youthful playwright.

" How much is that ? " queried Hanneh Breineh.

"Enough to buy up all your fish-markets in Delancey Street," laughed Abe in good-natured raillery at his mother.

Her son's jest cut like a knife-thrust in her heart. She felt her heart ache with the pain that she was shut out from their successes. Each added triumph only widened the gulf. And when she tried to bridge this gulf by asking questions they only thrust her back upon herself.

"Your fame has even helped me to get my hat trade solid with the Four Hundred," put in Fanny. "You bet I let Mrs. Van Suyden know that our box is next to the President's. She said she would drop in to meet you. Of course she let on to me that she hadn't seen the play yet, though my designer said she saw her there on the opening night."

"Oh, gosh, the toadies!" sneered Benny. "Nothing so sickens you with success as the way people who once shoved you off the side-walk come crawling to you on their stomachs begging you to dine with them."

"Say, that leading man of yours, he's some class!" cried Fanny. "That's the man I'm looking for. Will you invite him to supper after the theatre?"

The playwright turned to his mother.

"Say, ma," he said laughingly, "how would you like a real actor for a son-in-law?"

"She should worry," mocked Sam. "She'll be discussing with him the future of the Greek drama. Too bad it doesn't happen to be Warfield, or mother could give him tips on the 'Auctioneer'."

Jake turned to his mother with a covert grin.

"I guess you have no objection if Fanny got next to Benny's leading man. He makes at least fifteen hundred a week. That wouldn't be such a bad addition to the family, would it?"

Again the bantering tone stabbed Hanneh Breineh. Everything in her began to tremble and break loose.

"Why do you ask me?" she cried, throwing her napkin into her plate. "Do I count for a person in this house? I'll say something, will you even listen to me? What is to me the grandest man that my daughter could pick out? Another enemy in my house! Another person to shame himself from me!" She swept in her children in one glance of despairing anguish as she rose from the table. "What worth is an old mother to American children? The President is coming to-night to the theatre, and none of you

asked me to go." Unable to check the rising tears, she fled toward the kitchen and banged the door.

They all looked at one another guiltily.

"Say, sis," Benny called out sharply, "what sort of frame-up is this? Haven't you told mother that she was to go with us to-night?"

"Yes—I——" Fanny bit her lips as she fumbled evasively for words. "I asked her if she wouldn't mind my taking her some other time."

"Now you have made a mess of it!" fumed Benny. "Mother'll be too hurt to go now."

"Well, I don't care," snapped Fanny. "I can't appear with mother in a box at the theatre. Can I introduce her to Mrs. Van Suyden? And suppose your leading man should ask to meet me?"

"Take your time, sis. He hasn't asked yet," scoffed Benny.

"The more reason I shouldn't spoil my chances. You know mother. She'll spill the beans that we come from Delancey Street the minute we introduce her anywhere. Must I always have the black shadow of my past trailing after me?"

"But have you no feelings for mother?" admonished Abe.

"I've tried harder than all of you to do my duty. I've lived with her." She turned angrily upon them. "I've borne the shame of mother while you bought her off with a present and a treat here and there. God knows how hard I tried to civilise her so as not to have to blush with shame when I take her anywhere. I dressed her in the most stylish Paris models, but Delancey Street sticks out from every inch of her. Whenever she opens her mouth, I'm done for. You fellows had your chance to rise in the world because a man is free to go up as high as he can reach up to; but, I with all my style and pep, can't get a man my equal because a girl is always judged by her mother."

They were silenced by her vehemence, and unconsciously turned to Benny.

"I guess we all tried to do our best for mother," said Benny, thoughtfully. "But wherever there is growth, there is pain and heartbreak. The trouble with us is that the ghetto of the Middle Ages and the children of the twentieth century have to live under one roof, and——"

A sound of crashing dishes came from the kitchen, and the voice

of Hanneh Breineh resounded through the dining-room as she wreaked her pent-up fury on the helpless servant.

"Oh, my nerves! I can't stand it any more! There will be no girl again for another week!" cried Fanny.

"Oh, let up on the old lady," protested Abe. "Since she can't take it out on us any more, what harm is it ■ she curses the servants?"

"If you fellows had to chase around employment agencies, you wouldn't see anything funny about it. Why can't we move into a hotel that will do away with the need of servants altogether?"

"I got it better," said Jake consulting a notebook from his pocket. "I have on my list an apartment on Riverside Drive where there's only a small kitchenette; but we can do away with the cooking, for there ■ a dining service in the building."

The new Riverside apartment to which Hanneh Breineh was removed by her socially ambitious children was for the habitually active mother an empty desert of enforced idleness. Deprived of her kitchen, Hanneh Breineh felt robbed of the last reason of her existence. Cooking and marketing and pottering busily with pots and pans gave her an excuse for living and struggling and bearing up with her children. The lonely idleness of Riverside Drive stunned all her senses and arrested all her thoughts. It gave her that choked sense of being cut off from air, from life, from everything warm and human. The cold indifference, the each-for-himself look in the eyes of the people about her were like stinging slaps in the face. Even the children had nothing real or human in them. They were starched and stiff miniatures of their elders.

But the most unendurable part of the stifling life on Riverside Drive was being forced to eat in the public dining-room. No matter how hard she tried to learn polite table manners, she always found people staring at her, and her daughter rebuking her for eating with the wrong fork or guzzling the soup or staining the cloth.

In a fit of rebellion Hanneh Breineh resolved never to go down to the public dining-room again, but to make use of the gas-stove in the kitchenette to cook her own meals. That very day she rode down to Delancey Street and purchased a new market basket. For some time she walked among the haggling push-cart vendors

relaxing and swimming in the warm waves of her old familiar past.

A fish peddler held up a large carp in his black, hairy hand and waved it dramatically :

" Women ! Women ! Fourteen cents a pound ! "

He ceased his raucous shouting as he saw Hanneh Breineh in her rich attire approach his cart.

" How much ? " she asked, pointing to the fattest carp.

" Fifteen cents, lady," said the peddler, smirking as he raised his price.

" Swindler ! Didn't I hear you call fourteen cents ? " shrieked Hanneh Breineh, exultingly, the spirit of the penny chase surging in her blood. Diplomatically, Hanneh Breineh turned as if to go, and the fisherman seized her basket in frantic fear.

" I should live ; I'm losing money on the fish, lady," whined the peddler. " I'll let it down to thirteen cents for you only."

" Two pounds for a quarter, and not a penny more." said Hanneh Breineh, thrilling again with the rare sport of bargaining, which had been her chief joy in the good old days of poverty.

" Nu, I want to make the first sale for good luck." The peddler threw the fish on the scales.

As he wrapped up the fish, Hanneh Breineh saw the driven look of worry in his haggard eyes, and when he counted out the change from her dollar, she waved it aside. " Keep it for your luck," she said, and hurried off to strike a new bargain at a push-cart of onions.

Hanneh Breineh returned triumphantly with her purchases.

The basket under her arm gave forth the old, hornelike odours of herring and garlic, while the scaly tail of a four pound carp protruded from its newspaper wrapping. A gilded placard on the door of the apartment house proclaimed that all merchandise must be delivered through the trade entrance in the rear ; but Hanneh Breineh with her basket strode proudly through the marble-panelled hall and rang nonchalantly for the elevator.

The uniformed hall-man, erect, expressionless, frigid with dignity, stepped forward :

" Just a minute, madam. I'll call a boy to take up your basket for you."

Hanneh Breineh, glaring at him, jerked the basket savagely from

his hands. "Mind your own business!" she retorted. "I'll take ■ up myself. Do you think you're a Russian policeman to boss me in my own house?"

Angry lines appeared on the countenance of the representative of social decorum.

"It ■ against the rules, madam," he said, stiffly.

"You should sink into the earth with all your rules and brass buttons. Ain't this America? Ain't this a free country? Can't I take up in my own house what I buy with my own money?" cried Hanneh Breineh, revelling in the opportunity to shower forth the volley of invectives that had been suppressed in her for the weeks of deadly dignity of Riverside Drive.

In the midst of this uproar Fanny came in with Mrs. Van Suyden. Hanneh Breineh rushed over to her, crying:

"This bossy policeman won't let me take up my basket in the elevator."

The daughter, unnerved with shame and confusion, took the basket in her white-gloved hand and ordered the hall-boy to take it around to the regular delivery entrance.

Hanneh Breineh was so hurt by her daughter's defence of the hall-man's rules that she utterly ignored Mrs. Van Suyden's greeting and walked up the seven flights of stairs out of sheer spite.

"You see the tragedy of my life?" broke out Fanny, turning to Mrs. Van Suyden.

"You poor child! You go right up to your dear old lady mother and I'll come some other time."

Instantly Fanny regretted her words. Mrs. Van Suyden's pity only aroused her wrath the more against her mother.

Breathless from climbing the stairs, Hanneh Breineh entered the apartment just as Fanny tore the faultless millinery creation from her head and threw it on the floor in a rage.

"Mother, you are the ruination of my life! You have driven away Mrs. Van Suyden, as you have driven away all my best friends. What do you think we got this apartment for but to get rid of your fish smells and your brawls with the servants? And here you come with a basket on your arm as if you just landed from steerage! And this afternoon, of all times, when Benny is bringing his leading man to tea. When will you ever stop disgracing us?"

"When I'm dead," said Hanneh Breineh, grimly. "When the earth will cover me up, then you'll be free to go your American way."

I'm not going to make myself over for a lady on Riverside Drive. I hate you and all your swell friends. I'll not let myself be choked up here by you or by that hall-boss policeman that is higher in your eyes than your own mother."

"So that's your thanks for all we've done for you?" cried the daughter.

"All you've done for me!" shouted Hanneh Breineh. "What have you done for me? You hold me like a dog on a chain! It stands in the Talmud: some children give their mother dry bread and water and go to Heaven for it, and some give their mothers roast duck and go to Gehenna because it's not given with love."

"You want me to love you yet?" raged the daughter. "You knocked every bit of love out of me when I was yet a kid. All the memories of childhood I have is your everlasting cursing and yelling that we were gluttons."

The bell rang sharply, and Hanneh Breineh flung open the door.

"Your groceries, ma'am," said the boy.

Hanneh Breineh seized the basket from him, and with a vicious fling sent it rolling across the room, strewing its contents over the Persian rugs and inlaid floor. Then seizing her hat and coat, she stormed out of the apartment and down the stairs.

Mr. and Mrs. Pelz sat crouched and shivering over their meagre supper when the door opened, and Hanneh Breineh in fur coat and plumed hat charged into the room.

"I come to cry out to you my bitter heart," she sobbed. "Woe is me! It is so black for my eyes!"

"What is the matter with you, Hanneh Breineh?" cried Mrs. Pelz in bewildered alarm.

"I am turned out of my own house by the brass-buttoned policeman that bosses the elevator. Oi-i-i! Weh-h-h-h! What have I from my life? The whole world rings with my son's play. Even the President came to see it, and I, his mother, have not seen it yet. My heart is dying in me like a prison," she went on wailing. "I am starved out for a piece of real eating. In that swell restaurant is nothing but napkins and forks and lettuce-leaves. There are a dozen plates to every bite of food. And it looks so fancy on the plate, but it's nothing but straw in the mouth. I'm starving, but I can't swallow down their American eating."

"Hanneh Breineh," said Mrs. Pelz, "you are sinning before

God. Look on your fur coat ; it alone would feed a whole family for a year. I never had yet a piece of fur trimming on a coat, and you are in fur from the neck to the feet. I never had yet a piece of feather on a hat, and your hat is all feathers."

"What are you envying me?" protested Hanneh Breineh. "What have I from all my fine furs and feathers when my children are strangers to me? All the fur coats in the world can't warm up the loneliness inside my heart. All the grandest feathers can't hide the bitter shame in my face that my children shame themselves from me."

Hanneh Breineh suddenly loomed over them like some ancient, heroic figure of the Bible condemning unrighteousness.

"Why should my children shame themselves from me? From where did they get the stuff to work themselves up in the world? Did they get it from the air? How did they all get their smartness to rise over the people around them? Why don't the children of born American mothers write my Benny's plays? It is I, who never had a chance to be a person, who gave him the fire in his head. If I would have had a chance to go to school and learn the language, what couldn't I have been? ■ is I and my mother and my mother's mother and my father and father's father who had such a black life in Poland—it is our choked thoughts and feelings that are flaming up in my children and making them great in America. And yet they shame themselves from me!"

For a moment Mr. and Mrs. Pelz were hypnotised by the sweep of her words. Then Hanneh Breineh sank into a chair in utter exhaustion. She began to weep bitterly, her body shaking with sobs.

"Woe is me! For what did I suffer and hope on my children? A bitter old age—my end. I'm so lonely!"

All the dramatic fire seemed to have left her. The spell was broken. They saw the Hanneh Breineh of old, ever discontented, ever complaining even in the midst of riches and plenty.

"Hanneh Breineh," said Mrs. Pelz, "the only trouble with you is that you got it too good. People will tear the eyes out of your head because you're complaining yet. If I only had your fur coat! If I only had your diamonds! I have nothing. You have everything. You are living on the fat of the land. You go right back home and thank God that you don't have my bitter lot."

"You got to let me stay here with you," insisted Hanneh Breineh.

"I'll not go back to my children except when they bury me. When they will see my dead face, they will understand how they killed me."

Mrs. Pelz glanced nervously at her husband. They barely had enough covering for their one bed ; how could they possibly lodge a visitor ?

"I don't want to take up your bed," said Hanneh Breineh. "I don't care if I have to sleep on the floor or on the chairs, but I'll stay here for the night."

Seeing that she was bent on staying, Mr. Pelz prepared to sleep by putting a few chairs next to the trunk, and Hanneh Breineh was invited to share the rickety bed with Mrs. Pelz.

The mattress was full of lumps and hollows. Hanneh Breineh lay cramped and miserable, unable to stretch out her limbs. For years she had been accustomed to hair mattresses and ample woollen blankets, so that though she covered herself with her fur coat, she was too cold to sleep. But worse than the cold were the creeping things on the wall. And as the lights were turned low, the mice came through the broken plaster and raced across the floor. The foul odours of the kitchen-sink added to the night of horrors.

"Are you going back home ?" asked Mrs. Pelz, as Hanneh Breineh put on her hat and coat the next morning.

"I don't know where I am going," she replied, as she put a bill into Mrs. Pelz's hand.

For hours Hanneh Breineh walked through the crowded ghetto streets. She realised that she no longer could endure the sordid ugliness of her past, and yet she could not go home to her children. She only felt that she must go on and on.

In the afternoon a cold drizzling rain set in. She was worn out from the sleepless night and hours of tramping. With a piercing pain in her heart she at last turned back and boarded the subway for Riverside Drive. She had fled from the marble sepulchre of the Riverside apartment to her old home in the ghetto ; but now she knew that she could not live there again. She had outgrown her past by the habits of years of physical comforts, and these material comforts that she could no longer do without choked and crushed the life within her.

A cold shudder went through Hanneh Breineh as she approached the apartment house. Peering through the plate glass of the door

she saw the face of the uniformed hall-man. For a hesitating moment she remained standing in the drizzling rain, unable to enter, and yet knowing full well that she would have to enter.

Then suddenly Hanneh Breineh began to laugh. She realised that it was the first time she had laughed since her children had become rich. But it was the hard laugh of bitter sorrow. Tears streamed down her furrowed cheeks as she walked slowly up the granite steps.

"The fat of the land!" muttered Hanneh Breineh, with a choking sob as the hall man with immobile face deferentially swung open the door—"the fat of the land!"

## OLD MAN MINICK

By EDNA FERBER

Edna Ferber, born in Michigan, U.S.A., 1887. At the age of seventeen she began work as a reporter on an American daily paper and then took up short story writing for magazines. Some of her stories plays and films have been enormous successes throughout the world, notably "Show Boat," "Cimarron," "Gigolo," "Dinner at Eight" (with George S. Kaufmann). Her other works are: "Dawn O'Hara," "Buttered Side Down," "Roast Beef Medium," "Personality Plus," "Emma McChesney & Co.," "Fanny Herself," "Cheerful—By Request," "Half Portions," "The Girls," "So Big," "The Royal Family," "American Beauty."

His wife had always spoiled him outrageously. No doubt of that. Take, for example, the matter of the pillows merely. Old man Minick slept high. That is, he thought he slept high. He liked two plump pillows on his side of the great, wide, old-fashioned cherry bed. He would sink into them with a vast grunting and sighing and puffing expressive of nerves and muscles relaxed and gratified. But in the morning there was always one pillow on the floor. He had thrown it there. Always, in the morning, there it lay, its plump, white cheek turned reproachfully up at him from the side of the bed. Ma Minick knew this, naturally, after forty years of the cherry bed. But she never begrudged him that extra pillow. Each morning when she arose, she picked it up on her way to shut the window. Each morning the bed was made up with two pillows on his side of it, as usual.

Then there was the window. Ma Minick liked it open wide. Old man Minick, who rather prided himself on his modernism (he called it being up-to-date), was distrustful of the night air. In the folds of its sable mantle lurked a swarm of dread things—cold, clammy miasmas, fevers.

"Night air's just like any other air," Ma Minick would say, with some asperity. Ma Minick was no worm; and as modern as he. So when they went to bed the window would be open wide. They would lie there, the two old ones, talking comfortably about commonplace things. The kind of talk that goes on

between a man and woman who have lived together in wholesome peace (spiced with occasional wholesome bickerings) for more than forty years.

"Remind me to see Gerson to-morrow about that lock on the basement door. The paper's full of burglars."

"If I think of it." She never failed to.

"George and Nettie haven't been over in a week now."

"Oh, well, young folks. . . . Did you stop in and pay that Koritz the fifty cents for pressing your suit?"

"By golly, I forgot again! First thing in the morning."

A sniff. "Just smell the yards." It was Chicago.

"Wind must be from the west."

Sleep came with reluctant feet, but they wooed her patiently. And presently she settled down between them and they slept lightly. Usually, some time during the night, he awoke, slid cautiously and with infinite stealth from beneath the covers, and closed the wide-flung window to within a bare two inches of the sill. Almost invariably she heard him; but she was a wise old woman; a philosopher of parts. She knew better than to allow a window to shatter the peace of their marital felicity. As she lay there, smiling a little grimly in the dark and giving no sign of being awake, she thought, "Oh, well, I guess a closed window won't kill me either."

Still, sometimes, just to punish him a little, and to prove that she was nobody's fool, she would wait until he had dropped off to sleep again and then she, too, would achieve a stealthy trip to the window and would raise it slowly, carefully, inch by inch.

"How did that window come to be open?" he would say in the morning, being a poor dissembler.

"Window? Why, it's just the way it was when we went to bed." And she would stoop to pick up the pillow that lay on the floor.

There was little or no talk of death between this comfortable, active, sound-appearing man of almost seventy and this plump, capable woman of sixty-six. But as always, between husband and wife, it was understood wordlessly (and without reason) that old man Minick would go first. Not that either of them had the slightest intention of going. In fact, when it happened they were planning to spend the winter in California and perhaps live there indefinitely if they liked it and didn't get too lonesome for George

and Nettie and the Chicago smoke, and Chicago noise, and Chicago smells and rush and dirt. Still the solid sum paid yearly in insurance premiums showed clearly that he meant to leave her in comfort and security. Besides, the world is full of widows. Everyone sees that. But how many widowers? Few. Widows there are by the thousands; living alone; living in hotels; living with married daughters and sons-in-law or married sons and daughters-in-law. But of widowers in a like situation there are bewilderingly few. And why this should be no one knows.

So, then. The California trip never materialised. And the year that followed never was quite clear in old man Minick's dazed mind. In the first place, it was the year in which stocks tumbled and broke their backs. Gilt-edged securities showed themselves to be tinsel. Old man Minick had retired from active business just one year before, meaning to live comfortably on the fruit of a half-century's toil. He now saw that fruit rotting all about him. There was in it hardly enough nourishment to sustain them. Then came the day when Ma Minick went downtown to see Matthews about that pain right here and came home looking shrivelled, talking shrilly about nothing, and evading Pa's eyes. Followed months that were just a jumble of agony, X-rays, hope, despair, morphia, nothingness.

After it was all over: "But I was going first," old man Minick said, dazedly.

The old house on Ellis near Thirty-ninth was sold for what it would bring. George, who knew Chicago real estate if anyone did, said they might as well get what they could. Things would only go lower, you'll see. And nobody's going to have any money for years. Besides, look at the neighbourhood!

Old man Minick said George was right. He said everybody was right. You would hardly have recognised in this shrunken figure and wattled figure the spruce and dressy old man whom Ma Minick used to spoil so delightfully. "You know best, George. You know best." He who used to stand up to George until Ma Minick was moved to say, "Now, Pa, you don't know everything."

After Ma when bills, and the hospital, and the nurses and the medicines and the thousand and one things were paid there was left exactly five hundred dollars a year.

"You're going to make your home with us, Father," George

and Nettie said. Alma, too, said this would be the best. Alma, the married daughter, lived in Seattle. "Though you know Fred and I would be only too glad to have you."

Seattle! The ends of the earth. Oh, no. No! he protested, every fibre of his old frame clinging to the accustomed. Seattle, at seventy! He turned piteous eyes on his son George and his daughter-in-law Nettie. "You're going to make your home with us, Father," they reassured him. He clung to them gratefully. After it was over, Alma went home to her husband and their children.

So now he lived with George and Nettie in the five-room flat on South Park Avenue, just across from Washington Park. And there was no extra pillow on the floor.

Netta hadn't said he couldn't have the extra pillow. He had told her he used two and she had given him two the first week. But every morning she had found a pillow cast on the floor.

"I thought you used two pillows, Father."

"I do."

"But there's always one on the floor when I make the bed in the morning. You always throw one on the floor. You only sleep on one pillow, really."

"I use two pillows."

But the second week there was one pillow. He tossed and turned a good deal in his bedroom off the kitchen. But he got used to it in time. Not used to it, exactly, but—well——

The bedroom off the kitchen wasn't as menial as it sounds. It was really rather cosy. The five-room flat held living-room, front bedroom, dining-room, kitchen, and maid's room. The room off the kitchen was intended as a maid's room, but Netta had no maid. George's business had suffered with the rest. George and Nettie had said, "I wish there was a front room for you, Father. You could have ours and we'd move back here, only this room's too small for twin beds and the dressing-table and the chiffonier." They had meant it—or meant to mean it.

"This is fine," old man Minick had said. "This is good enough for anybody." There was a narrow, white enamel bed and a tiny dresser and a table. Nettie had made gay cretonne covers and spreads and put a little reading-lamp on the table and arranged his things. Ma Minick's picture on the dresser with her mouth sort of pursed to make it look small. It wasn't a

recent picture. Nettie and George had had it framed for him as a surprise. They had often urged her to have a picture taken, but she had dreaded it. He needed no photograph of Ma Minick. He had a dozen of them ; a gallery of them ; thousands of them. Lying on his one pillow he could take them out and look at them one by one as they passed in review, smiling, serious, chiding, praising, there in the dark. He needed no picture on his dresser.

A handsome girl, Nettie, and a good girl. He thought of her as a girl, though she was well past thirty. George and Nettie had married late. This was only the third year of their marriage. Alma, the daughter, had married young, but George had stayed on, unwed, in the old house on Ellis until he was thirty-six and all Ma Minick's friend's daughters had had a try at him in vain. The old people had urged him to marry, but it had been wonderful to have him around the house, just the same. Somebody young around the house. Not that George had stayed around very much. But when he was there you knew he was there. He whistled while dressing. He sang in the bath. He roared down the stairway, " Ma, where's my clean shirts ? " The telephone rang for him. Ma Minick prepared special dishes for him. The servant girl said, " Oh, now, Mr. George, look what you've done ! Gone and spilled the grease all over my clean kitchen floor ! " and wiped it up adoringly while George laughed and gobbled his bit of food filched from pot or frying pan.

They had been a little surprised about Nettie. George was in the bond business and she worked for the same firm. A plump, handsome, eye-glassed woman, with fine fresh colouring, a clear skin that old man Minick called appetising, and a great coil of smooth dark hair. She wore plain tailored things and understood the bond business in a way that might have led you to think her a masculine mind if she hadn't been so feminine, too, in her manner. Old man Minick liked her better than Ma Minick had.

Nettie had called him Pop and joked with him and almost flirted with him in a daughterly sort of way. He liked to squeeze her plump arm and pinch her soft cheek between thumb and finger. She would laugh up at him and pat his shoulder and that shoulder would straighten spryly and he would waggle his head doggishly. " Look out there, George ! " the others in the room

would say. "Your dad'll cut you out. First thing you know you'll lose your girl, that's all."

Nettie would smile. Her teeth were white and strong and even. Old man Minick would laugh and wink, immensely pleased and flattered. "We understand each other, don't we, Pop?" Nettie would say.

During the first years of their married life Nettie stayed home. She fussed happily about her little flat, gave parties, went to parties, played bridge. She seemed to love the ease, the relaxation, the small luxuries. She and George were very much in love. Before her marriage she had lived in a boarding-house on Michigan Avenue. At the mention of it now she puckered up her face. She didn't attempt to conceal her fondness for these five rooms of hers, so neat, so quiet, so bright, so cosy. Overstuffed velvet in the living-room, with silk lamp-shades, and small tables holding books and magazines and little boxes containing cigarettes or hard candies. Very modern. A gate-legged table in the dining-room. Caramel-coloured walnut in the bedroom, rich and dark and smooth. She loved it. An orderly woman. Everything in its place. Before eleven o'clock the little apartment was shining, spotless; cushions plumped, crumbs brushed, vegetables in cold water. The telephone. "Hello! . . . Oh, hello, Bess! Oh, hours ago. . . . Not a thing. . . . Well, if George is willing. . . . I'll call him up and ask him. We haven't seen a show in two weeks. I'll call you back within the next half-hour. . . . No, I haven't done my marketing yet. . . . Yes, and have dinner down town. Meet at seven."

Into this orderly, smooth-running mechanism was catapulted a bewildered old man. She no longer called him Pop. He never dreamed of squeezing the plump arm or pinching the smooth cheek. She called him Father. Sometimes George's father. Sometimes, when she was telephoning, there came to him—"George's father's living with us now, you know. I can't."

They were very kind to him, Nettie and George. "Now just you sit right down here, Father. What do you want to go poking off into your own room for?"

He remembered that in the last year Nettie had said something about going back to work. There wasn't enough to do around the house to keep her busy. She was sick of afternoon parties. Sew and eat, that's all, and gossip, or play bridge. Besides, look

■ the money. Business was awful. The two old people had resented this idea as much as George had—more, in fact. They were scandalised.

"Young folks nowadays!" shaking their heads. "Young folks nowadays. What are they thinking off! In my days when you got married you had babies."

George and Nettie had had no babies. At first Nettie had said, "I'm so happy I just want a chance to rest. I've been working since I was seventeen. I just want to rest first." One year. Two years. Three. And now Pa Minick.

Ma Minick, in the old house on Ellis Avenue, had kept a loose sort of larder; not lavish, but plentiful. They both ate a great deal, as old people are likely to do. Old man Minick, especially, had liked to nibble. A handful of raisins from the box on the shelf. A couple of nuts from the dish on the sideboard. A bit of candy rolled beneath the tongue. At dinner (sometimes, toward the last, even at noon-time) a plate of steaming soup, hot, revivifying, stimulating. Plenty of this and plenty of that. "What's the matter, Jo? You're not eating." But he was, amply. Ma Minick had liked to see him eat too much. She was wrong, of course.

But at Nettie's things were different. Here was a sufficient but stern ménage. So many mouths to feed; just so many lamb chops. Nettie knew about calories and vitamins and mysterious things like that, and talked about them. So many calories in this. So many calories in that. He never was quite clear in his mind about these things said to be lurking in his food. He had always thought of spinach as spinach, chops as chops. But to Nettie they were calories. They lunched together, these two, George was, of course, downtown. For herself Nettie would have one of those feminine pick-up lunches; a dab of apple sauce, a cup of tea, and a slice of cold toast left from breakfast. This she would eat while old man Minick guiltily supped up his cup of warmed-over broth, or his coddled egg. She always pressed upon him any bit of cold meat that was left from the night before, or any remnants of vegetable or spaghetti. Often there was quite a little fleet of saucers and sauce plates grouped about his main plate. Into these he dipped and swooped uncomfortably, and yet with a relish. Sometimes, when he had finished he would look about, furtively.

"What'll you have, Father? Can I get you something?"

"Nothing, Nettie, nothing. I'm doing fine." She had finished the last of her toast and was waiting for him kindly.

Still, this balanced and scientific fare seemed to agree with him. As the winter went on he seemed actually to have regained most of his former hardiness and vigour. A handsome old boy he was, ruddy, hale, with the zest of a juicy old apple, slightly withered but still sappy. It should be mentioned that he had a dimple in his cheek which flashed unexpectedly when he smiled. It gave him a roguish—almost boyish—effect most appealing to the beholder. Especially the feminine beholder. Much of his spoiling at the hands of Ma Minick had doubtless been due to this mere depression of the skin.

Spring was to bring a new and welcome source of enrichment into his life. But these first six months of his residence with George and Nettie were hard. No spoiling there. He missed being made much of. He got kindness, but he needed love. Then, too, he was rather a gabby old man. He liked to hold forth. In the old house on Ellis there had been visiting back and forth between men and women of his own age, and Ma's. At these gatherings he had waxed oratorical or argumentative, and they had heard him, some in agreement, some in disagreement, but always respectfully, whether he prated of real estate or social depravity, prohibition or European exchange.

"Let me tell you, here and now, something's got to be done before you can get a country back on a sound financial basis. Why, take Russia alone, why . . ." Or: "Young people nowadays! They don't know what respect means. I tell you there's got to be a change and there will be, and it's the older generation that's got to bring it about. What do they know of hardship! What do they know of work—real work. Most of 'em's never done a real day's work in their life. All they think of is dancing and gambling and drinking. Look at the way they dress! Look at . . ."

*Ad lib.*

"That's so," the others would agree. "I was saying only yesterday . . ."

Then, too, until a year or two before, he had taken an active part in business. He had retired, only at the urging of Ma and the children. They said he ought to rest and play and enjoy himself.

Now, as his strength and good spirits gradually returned he began to go downtown, mornings. He would dress, carefully, though a little shakily. He had always shaved himself and he kept this up. All in all, during the day, he occupied the bathroom literally for hours, and this annoyed Nettie to the point of frenzy, though she said nothing. He liked the white cheerfulness of the little tiled room. He puddled about in the water endlessly. Snorted and splashed and puffed and snuffled and blew. He was one of those audible washers who emerge dripping and whose ablutions are distributed impartially over ceilings, walls, and floor.

Nettie, at the closed door : " Father, are you all right ? "

Splash ! Prrrf ! " Yes. Sure. I'm all right."

" Well, I didn't know. You've been in there so long."

He was a neat old man, but there was likely to be a spot or so on his vest or his coat lapel, or his tie. Ma used to remove these from off him, as the occasion demanded, rubbing carefully and scolding a little, making a chiding sound between tongue and tooth indicative of great impatience of his carelessness. He had rather enjoyed these sounds, and this rubbing and scratching on the cloth with the finger-nail and moistened rag. They indicated that someone cared. Cared about the way he looked. Had pride in him. Loved him. Nettie never removed spots. Though infrequently she said, " Father, just leave that suit out, will you ? I'll send it to the cleaner's with George's. The man's coming to-morrow morning." He would look down at himself, hastily, and attack a spot here and there with a futile finger-nail.

His morning toilette completed, he would make for the Fifty-first Street L. Seated in the train, he would assume an air of importance and testy haste ; glance out of the window ; look at his watch. You got the impression of a handsome well-preserved old gentleman on his way downtown to consummate a shrewd business deal. He had been familiar with Chicago's downtown for fifty years and he could remember when State Street was a tree-shaded cottage district. The noise and rush and clangour of the Loop had long been familiar to him. But now he seemed to find the downtown trip arduous, even hazardous. The roar of the elevated trains, the hoarse hoots of the motor horns, the clang of the street cars, the bedlam that is Chicago's downtown district bewildered him, frightened him almost. He would skip

across the street like a harried hare, just missing a motor-truck's nose and all unconscious of the stream of invective directed at him by its charioteer. "Heh! Whatcha! . . . Look!"—Sometimes a policeman came to his aid, or attempted to, but he resented his proffered help.

"Say, look here, my lad," he would say to the tall, tired, and not at all burly (standing on one's feet directing traffic at Wabash and Madison for eight hours a day does not make for burliness) policeman, "I've been coming downtown since long before you were born. You don't need to help me. I'm no jay from the country."

He visited the Stock Exchange. This depressed him. Stocks were lower than ever and still going down. His five hundred a year was safe, but the rest seemed doomed for his lifetime, at least. He would drop in at George's office. George's office was pleasantly filled with dapper, neat young men and (surprisingly enough) dapper, slim, young women, seated at desks in the big, light-flooded room. At one corner of each desk stood a polished metal placard on a little standard, bearing the name of the desk's occupant: Mr. Owens, Mr. Satterlee, Mr. James, Miss Ranch, Mr. Minick.

"Hello, Father," Mr. Minick would say, looking annoyed. "What's bringing you down?"

"Oh, nothing. Nothing. Just had a little business to tend to over at the Exchange. Thought I'd drop in. How's business?"

"Rotten."

"I should think it was!" old man Minick would agree. "I—should—think—it—was! Hm."

George wished he wouldn't. He couldn't have it, that's all. Old man Minick would stroll over to the desk marked Satterlee, or Owens, or James. These brisk young men would toss an upward glance at him and concentrate again on the sheets and files before them. Old man Minick would stand, balancing from heel to toe and blowing out his breath a little. He looked a bit yellow and granulated and wavering there in the cruel morning light of the big plate glass windows. Or perhaps it was the contrast he presented with these slim, slick young salesmen.

"Well, h'are you to-day, Mr.—uh—Satterlee? What's the good word?"

Mr. Satterlee would not glance up this time. "I'm pretty well. Can't complain."

"Good. Good."

"Anything I can do for you?"

"No-o-o. No. Not a thing. Just dropped in to see my son a minute."

"I see." Not unkindly. Then, as old man Minick still stood there, balancing, Mr. Satterlee would glance up again, frowning a little. "Your son's desk is over there, I believe. Yes."

George and Nettie had a bedtime conference about these visits and Nettie told him gently that the bond house head objected to friends and relatives dropping in. It was against the rules. It had been so when she was employed there. Strictly business. She herself had gone there only once since her marriage.

Well, that was all right. Business was like that nowadays. Rush and grab and no time for anything.

The winter was a hard one, with a record snowfall and intense cold. He stayed indoors for days together. A woman of his own age in like position could have occupied herself usefully and happily. She could have hemmed a sash-curtain; knitted or crocheted; tidied a room; taken a hand with cooking or preparing of food; ripped an old gown; made over a new one; indulged in an occasional afternoon festivity with women of her own years. But for old man Minick there were no small tasks. There was nothing he could do to make his place in the household justifiable. He wasn't even particularly good at those small jobs of hammering, or painting, or general "fixing." He could drive a nail more swiftly, more surely than Nettie. "Now, Father, don't you bother. I'll do it. Just you go and sit down. Isn't it time for your afternoon nap?"

He waxed a little surly. "Nap! I just got up. I don't want sleep my life away."

George and Nettie frequently had guests in the evening. They played bridge, or poker, or talked.

"Come in, Father," George would say. "Come in. You all know Dad, don't you, folks?" He would sit down, uncertainly. At first he had attempted to expound, as had been his wont in the old house on Ellis. "I want to say, here and now, that this country's got to . . ." But they went on, heedless of him. They interrupted or refused, politely, to listen. So he sat in the room,

yet no part of it. The young people's talk swirled and eddied all about him. He was utterly lost in it. Now and then Nettie or George would turn to him and with raised voice (he was not all deaf and prided himself on it) would shout, "It's about this or that, Father. He was saying. . . ."

When the group roared with laughter at a sally from one of them he would smile uncertainly but amiably, glancing from one to the other in complete ignorance of what had passed, but not resenting it. He took to sitting more and more in his kitchen bedroom, smoking a comfortable pipe and reading and re-reading the evening paper. During that winter he and Canary, the negro washerwoman, became quite good friends. She washed down in the basement once a week but came up to the kitchen for her massive lunch. A walrus-waisted black woman, with a rich, throaty voice, a rolling eye and a kindly heart. He actually waited for her appearance above the laundry stairs.

"Wel, how's Mist' Minick to-day! Ah nev' did see a gemun spry's you ah fo' yo' age. No, suh! Nev' did."

At this rare praise he would straighten his shoulders and waggle his head. "I'm worth any ten of these young sprats to-day." Canary would throw back her head in a loud and companionable guffaw.

Nettie would appear at the kitchen swinging door. "Canary's having her lunch, Father. Don't you want to come into the front room with me. We'll have our lunch in another half-hour."

He followed her obediently enough. Nettie thought of him as a troublesome and rather pathetic child—a child who would never grow up. If she attributed any thoughts to that fine old head they were ambling thoughts bordering, perhaps, on senility. Little did she know how expertly this old one surveyed her and how ruthlessly he passed judgment. She never suspected the thoughts that formed in the active brain.

He knew about women. He had married a woman. He had had children by her. He looked at this woman—his son's wife—moving about her little five-room flat. She had theories about children. You didn't have them except under such and such circumstances. It wasn't fair otherwise. Plenty of money for their education. Well. He and his wife had had three children. Paul, the second, had died at thirteen. A blow, that had been. They had not always planned for the coming of the three but they

had always found a way, afterward. You managed somehow, once the little wrinkled red ball had fought its way into the world. You managed. You managed. Look at George. Yet when he was born, thirty-nine years ago, Pa and Ma had been hard put to it.

Sitting there, while Nettie dismissed him as negligible, he saw her clearly, grimly. He looked at her. She was plump, but not too short, with a generous width between the hips ; a broad full bosom, but firm ; round arms and quick slim legs ; a fine sturdy throat. The curve between arm and breast made a graceful, gracious line. . . . Working in a bond office. . . . There was nothing in the Bible about working in a bond office. Here was a woman built for child-bearing.

She thought him senile, negligible.

In March, Nettie had in a sewing-woman for a week. She had her two or three times a year. A hawk-faced woman of about forty-nine, with a blue-bottle figure and a rapacious eye. She sewed in the dining-room, and there was a pleasant hum of machine and snip of scissors and murmur of conversation and rustle of silky stuff ; and hot savoury dishes for lunch. She and old man Minick became great friends. She even let him take out bastings. This when Nettie had gone out from two to four, between fittings.

He chuckled and wagged his head. " I expect to be paid regular assistant's wages for this," he said.

" I guess you don't need any wages, Mr. Minick," the woman said. " I guess you're pretty well fixed."

" Oh, well, I can't complain " (five hundred a year).

" Complain ! I should say not ! If I was to complain it'd be different. Work all day to keep myself ; and nobody to come home to at night."

" Widow, ma'am ? "

" Since I was twenty. Work, work, that's all I've had. And lonesome. I suppose you don't know what lonesome is."

" Oh, don't I ? " slipped from him. He had dropped the bastings.

The sewing-woman flashed a look at him from the cold, hard eye. " Well, maybe you do. I suppose living here like this, with sons and daughters, ain't so grand, for all your money. Now me, I've always managed to keep my own little place that I could call home, to come back to. It's only two rooms, and

nothing to rave about, but it's home. Evenings I just cook and fuss around. Nobody to fuss for, but I fuss, anyway. Cooking, that's what I love to do. Plenty of good food, that's what folk need to keep their strength up." Nettie's lunch that day had been rather scant.

She was there a week. In Nettie's absence she talked against her. He protested, but weakly. Did she give him egg-noggs? Milk? Hot toddy? Soup? Plenty of good rich gravy and meat and puddings? Well! That's what folks needed when they weren't so young any more. Not that he looked old. My, no! Spryer than many young boys and handsomer than his own son if she did say so.

He fed on it, hungrily. The third day she was flashing meaning glances at him across the luncheon table. The fourth she pressed his foot beneath the table. The fifth, during Nettie's absence, she got up, ostensibly to look for a bit of cloth which she needed for sewing, and, passing him, laid a caressing hand on his shoulder. Laid it there and pressed his shoulder ever so little. He looked up, startled. The glances across the luncheon table had largely passed over his head; the foot beneath the table might have been an accident. But this—this was unmistakable. He stood up, a little shakily. She caught his hand. The hawk-like face was close to his.

"You need somebody to love you," she said. "Somebody to do for you, and love you." The hawk-like face came nearer. He leaned a little toward it. But between it and his face was Ma Minick's face, plump, patient, quizzical, kindly. His head came back sharply. He threw the woman's hot hand from him.

"Woman!" he cried. "Jezebel!"

The front door slammed. Nettie. The woman flew to her sewing. Old man Minick, shaking, went into his kitchen bedroom.

"Well," said Nettie, depositing her bundles on the dining-room table, "did you finish that faggoting? Why, you haven't done so very much, have you!"

"I ain't feeling so good," said the woman. "That lunch didn't agree with me."

"Why, it was a good plain lunch. I don't see——"

"Oh, it was plain enough, all right."

Next day she did not come to finish her work. Sick, she

telephoned. Nettie called it an outrage. She finished the sewing herself, though she hated sewing. Pa Minick said nothing, but there was a light in his eyes. Now and then he chuckled, to Nettie's infinite annoyance, though she said nothing.

"Wanted to marry me!" he said to himself, chuckling.  
"Wanted to marry me! The old rip!"

At the end of April, Pa Minick discovered Washington Park, and the Club, and his whole life was from that day transformed.

He had taken advantage of the early spring sunshine to take a walk, at Nettie's suggestion.

"Why don't you go into the Park, Father? It's really warm out. And the sun's lovely. Do you good."

He had put on his heaviest shirt, and a muffler, and George's old red sweater with the great white "C" on its front, emblem of George's athletic prowess at the University of Chicago; and over all, his frock coat. He had taken warm mittens and the big cane with the greyhound's-head handle, carved. So equipped, he had ambled uninterestedly over to the Park across the way. And there he had found new life.

New life is old life. For the Park was full of old men. Old men like himself, with greyhound's-head canes, and mufflers, and somebody's sweater worn beneath their greatcoats. They wore arctics, though the weather was fine. The skin of their hands and cheek-bones was glazed and had a tight look though it lay in fine little folds. There were splotches of brown on the back of their hands, and on the temples and foreheads. Their heavy grey or brown socks made comfortable folds above their ankles. From that April morning until winter drew on the Park saw old man Minick daily. Not only daily but by the day. Except for his meals, and a brief hour for his after-luncheon nap, he spent all his time there.

For in the Park old man Minick and all the old men gathered there found a Forum—a safety-valve—a means of expression. It did not take him long to discover that the Park was divided into two distinct sets of old men. There were the old men who lived with their married sons and daughters-in-law or married daughters and sons-in-law. Then there were the old men who lived in the Grant Home for Aged Gentlemen. You saw its fine, red-brick façade through the trees at the edge of the Park.

And the slogan of these first was :

"My son and my daughter, they wouldn't want me to live in any public home. No, sircce ! They want me right there with them. In their own home. That's the kind of son and daughter I've got !"

The slogan of the second was :

"I wouldn't live with any son or daughter. Independent. That's me. My own boss. Nobody to tell me what I can do and what I can't. Treat you like a child. I'm my own boss ! Pay my own good money and get my keep for it."

The first group strangely enough was likely to be spotted of vest and a little frayed as to collar. You saw them going on errands for their daughters-in-law. A loaf of bread. A spool of White No. 100. They took their small grandchildren to the duck-pond and between the two toddlers hand-in-hand—the old and the infirm and the infantile and infirm—it was hard to tell which led which.

The second group was shiny as to shoes, spotless as to mien, dapper as to clothes. They had no small errands. Theirs was a magnificent leisure. And theirs was magnificent conversation. The questions they discussed and settled there in the Park—these old men—were not international merely. They were cosmic in scope.

The War ? Peace ? Disarmament ? China ? Free love ? Mere conversational bubbles to be tossed in the air and disposed of in a burst of foam. Strong meat for old man Minick who had so long been fed on pap. But he soon got used to it. Between four and five in the afternoon, in a spot known as Under the Willows, the meeting took the form of a club—an open forum. A certain group made up of Socialists, Free Thinkers, parlour Anarchists, Bolshevists, had for years drifted there for talk. Old man Minick learned high-sounding phrases. "The Masters . . . democracy . . . toil of the many for the few . . . the ruling class . . . free speech . . . the People . . ."

The strong-minded ones held forth. The weaker ones drifted about on the outskirts, sometimes clinging to the moist and sticky paw of a round-eyed grandchild. Earlier in the day—at eleven o'clock, say—the talk was not so general nor so inclusive. The old men were likely to drift into groups of two or three or four. They sat on sun-bathed benches and their conversation was likely to be rather smutty at times, for all they looked so mild and patriarchal. They paid scant heed to the white-haired old

women who like themselves were sunning in the Park. They watched the young women switch by, with appreciative glances at their trim figures and slim ankles. The day of the short skirt was a grand time for them. They chuckled among themselves and made wicked comment. One saw only white-haired, placid, tremulous old men, but their minds still worked with belated masculinity like naughty small boys talking behind the barn.

Old man Minick early achieved a certain leadership in the common talk. He had always liked to hold forth. This last year had been of almost unendurable bottling up. At first he had timidly sought the less assertive ones of his kind. Mild old men who sat in rockers in the pavilion waiting for lunch time. Their conversation irritated him. They remarked everything that passed before their eyes.

"There's a boat. Fella with a boat."

A silence. Then heavily: "Yeh."

Five minutes.

"Look ■ those people laying on the grass. Shouldn't think it was warm enough for that. . . . Now they're getting up."

A group of equestrians passed along the bridle path on the opposite side of the lagoon. They made a frieze against the delicate spring greenery. The coats of the women were scarlet, vivid green, arresting, stimulating.

"Riders!"

"Yes."

"Good weather for riding."

A man was fishing nearby. "Good weather for fishing."

"Yes."

"Wonder what time it is, anyway." From a pocket, deep-buried, came forth a great gold blob of a watch. "I've got one minute to eleven."

Old man Minick dragged forth a heavy globe. "Mm. I've got eleven."

"Little fast, I guess."

Old man Minick shook off this conversation impatiently. This wasn't conversation. This was oral death, though he did not put it thus. He joined the other men. They were discussing Spiritualism. He listened, ventured an opinion, was heard respectfully and then combated mercilessly.

He rose to the verbal fight, and won it.

"Let's see," said one of the old men. "You're not living at the Grant Home, are you?"

"No," Old man Minick made reply, proudly. "I live with my son and his wife. They wouldn't have it any other way."

"Hm. Like to be independent myself."

"Lonesome, ain't it? Over there?"

"Lonesome! Say, Mr.—what'd you say your name was? Minick? Mine's Hughes—I never was lonesome in my life 'cept for six months when I lived with my daughter and her husband and their five children. Yes, sir. That's what I call lonesome, in an eight-room flat."

George and Nettie said, "It's doing you good, Father, being out in the air so much." His eyes were brighter, his figure straighter, his colour better. It was that day he had held forth so eloquently on the emigration question. He had to read a lot—papers and magazines and one thing and another—to keep up. He devoured all the books and pamphlets about bond issues and national finances brought home by George. In the Park he was considered an authority on bonds and banking. He and a retired real estate man Mowry sometimes debated a single question for weeks. George and Nettie, relieved, thought he ambled to the Park and spent senile hours with his drooling old friends discussing nothing amiably and witlessly. This while he was eating strong meat and drinking strong drink.

Summer sped. Was past. Autumn held a new dread for old man Minick. When winter came where should he go? Where should he go? Not back to the five-room flat all day, and the little back bedroom and nothingness. In his mind there rang a childish old song they used to sing at school. A silly song:

"Where do all the birdies go?

*I know. I know."*

But he didn't know. He was terror-stricken. October came and went. With the first of November the Park became impossible, even at noon, and with two overcoats and the sweater. The first frost was a black frost for him. He scanned the heavens daily for rain or snow. There was a cigar store and billiard room on the corner across the boulevard and there he sometimes went, with a few of his Park cronies, to stand behind the players' chairs and watch them ■ pinochle or rum. But this was a dull business.

Besides, the Grant men never came there. They had card rooms of their own.

He turned away from his smoky little den on a drab November day, sick at heart. The winter. He tried to face it, and at what he saw he shrank and was afraid.

He reached the apartment and went around to the rear dutifully. His rubbers were wet and muddy, and Nettie's living-room carpet was a fashionable grey. The back door was unlocked. It was Canary's day downstairs, he remembered. He took off his rubbers in the kitchen and passed into the dining-room. Voices. Nettie had company. Some friends, probably, for tea. He turned to go to his room, but stopped at hearing his own name. Father Minick. Father Minick. Nettie's voice.

"Of course, if it weren't for Father Minick I would have. But how can we as long as he lives with us. There isn't room. And we can't afford a bigger place now, with rents what they are. This way it wouldn't be fair to the child. We've talked it over, George and I. Don't you suppose? But not as long as Father Minick is with us. I don't mean we'd use the maid's room for a—for the—if we had a baby. But I'd have to have someone in to help, then, and we'd have to have that extra room."

He stood there in the dining-room, quiet. Quiet. His body felt queerly remote and numb, but his mind was working frenziedly. Clearly, too, in spite of the frenzy. Death. That was the first thought. Death. It would be easy to die. But he didn't want to die. Strange, but he didn't want to die. He liked life. The Park, the trees, the Club, the talk, the whole show. . . . Nettie was a good girl . . . the old must make way for the young. They had the right to be born. . . . Maybe it was just another excuse.

Almost four years married. Why not three years ago? . . . The right to live. The right to live. . . .

He turned stealthily, stealthily, and went back into the kitchen, put on his rubbers, stole out into the darkening November afternoon.

In an hour he was back. He entered at the front door this time, ringing the bell. He had never had a key. As if he were a child they would not trust him with one. Nettie's women friends were just leaving. In the air you smelled a mingling of perfume and tea, and cakes, and powder. He sniffed it, sensitively.

"How do you do, Mr. Minick," they said. "How are you! Well, you certainly look it. And how do you manage these gloomy days?"

He smiled genially, taking off his greatcoat and revealing the red sweater with the big white "C" on it. "I manage. I manage." He puffed out his chest. "I'm busy moving."

"Moving!" Nettie's startled eyes flew to his, held them. "Moving, Father?"

"Old folks must make way for the young," he said, gaily. "That's the law of life. Yes, sir! New ones. New ones."

Nettie's face was scarlet. "Father, what in the world——"

"I signed over at the Grant Home to-day. Move in next week." The women looked at her, smiling. Old man Minick came over to her and patted her plump arm. Then he pinched her smooth cheek with a quizzical thumb and forefinger. Pinched it and shook it ever so little.

"I don't know what you mean," said Nettie, out of breath.

"Yes, you do," said old man Minick, and while his tone was light and jesting there was in his old face something stern, something menacing. "Yes, you do."

When he entered the Grant Home a group of them were seated about the fireplace in the main hall. A neat, ruddy, septuagenarian circle. They greeted him casually, with delicacy of feeling, as if he were merely approaching them at their bench in the Park.

"Say, Minick, look here. Mowry here says China ought to have been included in the Four-power Treaty. He says——"

Old man Minick cleared his throat. "You take China, now," he said, "with her vast and practically, you might say, virgin country, why——"

An apple-cheeked maid in a black dress and a white apron stopped before him. He paused.

"Housekeeper says for me to tell you your room's all ready if you'd like to look at it now."

"Minute. Minute, my child." He waved her aside with the air of one who pays five hundred a year for independence and freedom. The girl turned to go. "Uh—young lady! Young lady!" She looked at him. "Tell the housekeeper two pillows, please. Two pillows on my bed. Be sure."

"Yes, sir. Two pillows. Yes, sir. I'll be sure."

## UNDER THE DOME

By WALDO FRANK

Waldo Frank, born in New Jersey, 1889, brought up in New York. Graduated at Yale. Author of "Our America," "Rahab," "City Block," "Holiday," "Chalk Face," "Salvos," "Virgin Spain."

"City Block" a book of short stories from which Mr. Frank has selected "Under the Dome" for this volume, has appeared in French, German, Russian, and Spanish. George Dupleix has written, in "La Revue Nouvelle," that "some of its stories will remain among the most beautiful of the world. Waldo Frank is the pioneer of a new literature." G. B. Munson has declared that "City Block" "contains the best short stories written by any living American—perhaps the best of any American living or dead." Edward J. O'Brien, the compiler of the famous annual series of "Best American Short Stories" and "Best English Short Stories" has stated his belief that "Waldo Frank may go as far as any artist who is writing in the world to-day." "No one else in America that I know," Lewis Mumford says in the "New York Herald Tribune," "combines anything like Mr. Frank's resources and insight with such wide scholarship and such ample observation of contemporary affairs in Europe and America."

THEY were two figures under the grey of the Dome . . . two straight faint figures of black: they were a man and woman with heads bowed, straight . . . under the surge of the Dome.

### I

Friday night when always he broke away in order to pray in the *Schul*, and when she sat in the shop and had to speak with the customers who came, these praying hours of Friday night. Shabbas morning at least he did not go also—My heart tells me it is wrong. Lord, forgive me for Esther and for my little girl. Lord, you know it is for them I do not go to *Schul* on Shabbas morning. . . . But by God, you will keep the store those two hours Friday? Do you hear? By God, what else have I ever asked you for? Don't you sit around and do nothing all the day, and aren't Flora's clothes a filth: and hardly if you'll coo'

our meals. But this you will do : this you will do ! Friday night. Lord, why is there no light in Esther ? What have I done, Lord ? What have I not done ?

She sat in a chair, always, near the side wall : her eyes lay burning against the cold glare of the gas.

Above her shoulder on the wall, was a large sheet of fashions. Women with wasp waists, smirking, rolling : stiff men, all clothes, with little heads. Under the table, where Meyer sits with his big feet so much to look at, Flora played, a soiled bundle, with a ball of yarn and a huge gleaming scissors.—No one perhaps comes, and then I do not mind sitting and keeping the store. I saw a dead horse in the street.—A dead horse, two days dead, rotting and stiff. Against the grey of the living street, a livid dead horse. A hot stink was his cold death against the street's cleanness. There are two little boys, wrapped in blue coat, blue muffler, leather cap. They stand above the gaunt head of the horse and sneer at him. His flank rises red and huge. His legs are four strokes away from life. He is dead. . . . The naughty boys pick up bricks. They stand, very close, above the head of the horse. They hurl down a brick. It strikes the horse's skull, falls sharp away. They hurl down a brick. It cuts the swollen nostril, falls soft away. The horse does not mind, the horse does not hurt. He is dead.

—Go away, you two ! Throwing stones at a dead horse ! Go away, I say ! How would you like——. When one is dead, stones strike one's skull and fall sharp away, one is moveless. When one is dead, stones strike the soft of one's throat and fall soft away, one is hurtless. When one is dead one does not hurt.

She sat and turned her eyes away from her child. Flora had smear on her face : her hands were grimed with the floor. One of her stockings was down : her little white knee was going to scrape on the floor, be black before it was bloody. So. . . . A long shining table under a cold gas spurt. A store with clothes and a stove, and no place for herself. A row of suits, all pressed and stiff with Meyer's diligence. A pile of suits, writhed with the wear of men, soiled, crumpled with traffic of streets, with bending of body in toil, in eating, in loving perhaps. Grimed living suits. Meyer takes an iron and it steams and it presses hard, it sucks up the grime. It sucks out the life from the suit.

The suit is stiff and dead, now, ready to go once more over the body of a man and suck to itself his life.

The automatic bell clangs. There in the open door was a dark tall woman—customer.

Eather stood too. She felt she was shorter and less tidy—more beautiful though.

Two women across the tailor-shop, seeing each other.

"I came for my husband's—for Mr. Breddan's dress-suit. Mr. Lanich told him it would be ready at seven?"

Eather Lanich moved, Sophie Breddan stood. Between slow, dark curve, swift, dark stroke of these two women, under a tailor's table the burn of a dirty child, mumbling intent with scissors between her soiled frail legs, at play with loose hair.

"Is this the one?"

The curve and the stroke came near across the table.

"Yes."

Eyes met. She is tidy and fresh and less beautiful, though, than I. She has no child. She has a flat with Sun and a swell husband who wears a swallow-tail and takes her out to parties. She has a diamond ring, her corsets are sweet. She has things ■ put into her time like candies into her mouth, like loved kisses into my mouth. She is all new with her smooth skin going below the collar of her suit.

—She has a child, and she lets her play dirty with scissors under a tailor table. "How much is it?" . . . After a decent bedtime.

—Does she think I care about this? "Oh, no hurry. Better come in and pay my—Mr. Lanich. Any time."

The clang of the bell.

Eather is seated. Her grey almond-tilted eyes seem sudden to stand out upon the farther wall of her husband's shop, and to look upon her. Her eyes speak soft warm words that touch her hair, touch her lips, lie like caressing fingers upon the soft cloth that lies upon her breast.

—Less beautiful than I, though. My flesh is soft and sweet, it is the colour of cream. What for? My hair is like an autumn tree gleaming with sun. I can let it fall through the high channel of my breast against my stomach that does not bulge but lies soft and low like a cushion of silk. What for? My eyes see beauty. What for? O there is no God. ■ there is a God, what for? He will come back and work. He will eat and work.

He is kind and good. What for? When he is excited with love, doesn't he make an ugly noise with his nose? What else does he make with his love? . . . Another like Flora? God forbid. What for?

She did not pull down the wide yellow shade, though it was night. The street was a ribbon of velvet blackness laid beside the hurting and sharp brightness of the store. The yellow light was hard like grains of sand under the quick of her nails. She was afraid of the street. She was hurt in the store. But the brightness clamped her. She did not move.—O let no more customers come! "Keep quiet, Flora." I cannot move. She was clamped.

But the store moved, moved.

There was a black Wheel with a gleaming axle—the Sun—that sent light dimming down its spokes as it spun. From the rim of the Wheel where it was black, bright dust flung away as it spun. The store was a speck of bright dust. It flung straight. It moved along the velvet path of the street, touching, not merging with its night. It moved, it moved, she sat still in its moving. The store caught up with Meyer. He entered the store. He was there. He was there, scooped up from the path of the street by the store. Now her work was over. He was there. The store was a still store, fixed in a dirty house. Its brightness the spurt of two jets of gas. He was back from *Schul*. —That is all.

A man with blond hair, flat feet that shuffled, small tender hands. A man with a mouth gentle and slow, with eyes timid to see: "Come, dear: that is no place."—Why she lets the child play with my shears!

Tender hands pull Flora from beneath the table. Flora comes blinking, unprotesting. Where her father's hands leave off from her, she stays. She sinks back to the floor. She looks at her little fists from which the scissors are gone. She misses hard gleaming steel. She opens and shuts her fists and looks at them: she cries. But she does not move.

Her mother does not move. . . . Her father does not move. He squats on the table. His head aways with his thoughts. He knows that Flora will stop crying . . . what can he do? . . . in perhaps half an hour. It is a weak cry. Grows weaker. He is used to it. There is work.

He sews. "A woman of valour who can find? For her price ■ far above rubies."—She will stay here, stay here silent. Flora should be in bed. Who to put his child in bed. Hard gas-light on her beloved hair? A wither, a wilt. . . . "She is like the merchant ships; she bringeth her food from afar." . . . He sews and rips.—What, Lord, have I left undone? I love my Esther. . . . He sews.—I love my little girl. Lord, I fear the Lord. . . . "She looketh well to the ways of the household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."—Lighten me, Lord, give me light. There is my daughter crying, who should sleep: and my wife sitting, who will not, who will never without me go home. She is afraid. She says she is afraid. She is sullen and silent. She is so fair and sweet against my heart. Lord! why did her hands that held my head speak a lie? And her silent lips that she let press upon my mouth, why were they lies? Lord, I cannot understand. Lord, I pray. I must sew bread for Esther and for my child. I go to *Schul* at least once each Shabbas, Lord. . . . Do I not fill the deep ten Penitential Days from *Rosh Ha Shonoh* to *Yom Ha Kippurim* with seeking out of heart? . . . He sews, he rips. The weeping of his child is done. Long stitches, here. She has found a chair's leg to play with. Her moist fingers clasp at the shrill wood. The wooden chair and her soft flesh wrestle. Esther sits still. He sews.

"Her children rise up and call her blessed.  
Her husband also, and he praiseth her :  
—Many daughters have done valiantly,  
But thou excellest them all.—  
Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain ;  
But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.  
Give her of the fruit of her hands ;  
And let her works praise her in the gates."



In the door and the clang again of the bell, a boy with them. A boy they knew—son of their neighbours—big for his years and heavy, with fat lips, eyes clouded, hair black and low over his clouded eyes. Esther alone saw, as he lurched in, one foot dragging always slightly.

He went for little Flora with no greeting for them: familiarly

as he knew he would find her, had come so, often.—He loves her, the man who squats on the table and sews smiles on the boy who loves and plays with his child.

"Hello, kid," voice of a thick throat, "look—what I got for you here."

Flora lets the chair of her late love lurch against her back, strike her forward. She does not care. She watches two hands—grey-caked over red—unwrap from paper a dazzle of colours, place it to her eyes on the floor, pull with a string: it has little wheels, it moves!

"Quackle-duck," he announces.

Flora spreads out her hands, sinks on her rump, feels its green head that bobs with purple bill, feels its yellow tail.

"Quackle-duck—yours," says the boy.

She takes the string from his hand. With shoulder and stomach she swings her arm backward and pulls. The duck spurts, bobbing its green long head against her leg.

She plays. The boy on his knees with soiled thick drawers showing between his stockings and his pants plays with her. . . .

Meyer Lanich did not cease from work, nor his woman from silence. His face was warm in pleasure, watching his child who had a toy and a playmate.—I am all warm and full of love for Herbert Rabinowich: perhaps some day I can show him, or do something for his father? Now there was no way but to go on working and smile so the pins in his mouth did not prick.

The eyes of Esther drew a line from these two children back to the birth of the one that is hers. She dwelt in a world about the bright small room like the night: in a world that roared and wailed, that reeled with despair of her hope.

She had borne this dirty child all clean beneath her heart. Her belly was sweet and white, it had borne her: her breasts were high and proud, they had emptied, they had come to sag for this dirty child on the floor: face and red lips on a floor that any shoes might step.

Had she not borne a Glory through the world, bearing this stir of perfect flesh? Had she not borne a Song through the harsh City? Had she not borne another mite of pain, another fleck of dirt upon the City's shame-heaps?

She lies in her bed burned in sweet pain. Pain wrings her body, wrings her soul like the word of the Lord within the lips of

Deborah. Her bed with white sheets, her bed with its pool of blood is an altar where she lays forth her Glory which she has walking carried like Song through the harsh city.—What have I mothered but dirt? . . .

A transfigured world she knows she will soon see. Yes : it is a flat of little light—and the bugs seep in from the other flats no matter how one cleans—it is a man of small grace, it is a life of few windows. But her child will be borne to smite life open wide. Her child shall leap above its father and its mother as the sun above forlorn fields. . . . She arose from her bed. She held her child in her arms. She walked through the reeling block with feet aflame. She entered the shop. . . . There—squatting with feet so wide to see—her man : his needle pressed by the selfsame finger. The world was not changed for her child. Behold her child changing—let her sit for ever upon her seat of tears—let her lay like fire to her breast this endless vision of her child changing unto the world. . . .

—I have no voice, I have no eyes. I am a woman who has lain with the world.

The world's voice upon my lips gave my mouth gladness.

The world's arm about my flanks gave my flesh glory.

I was big with gladness and glory.

Joyful I lost in love of my vision my eyes, in love of my song my voice.

I have borne another misery into the world. . . .

Meyer Lanich moves, putting away the trousers he has patched.—O Lord, why must I sew so many hours in order to reap my pain? Why must I work so long, heap the hard wither of so many hours upon my child who cannot sleep till I do, in order that all of us may be unhappy?

The clang and the door open. The mother of the boy.

"Oh, here you are! Excuse me, friends. I was worrying over Herbert. . . . Well, how goes it?"

She smiled and stepped into the room : saw them all.

"All well, Mrs. Rabinowich," said Meyer, "We are so glad when your Herbert comes to play with Florchen."

Mrs. Rabinowich turns the love of her face upon the children who do not attend her. A grey long face, bitterly pock-marked, in a glow of love.

"Look what your Herbert brought her," Meyer sews and smiles. "A toy. He shouldn't, now. Such a thing costs money."

Mrs. Rabinowich puts an anxious finger to her lips.

"Don't," she whispers. "■ he wants to, he should. It is lovely that he wants to. There's money enough for such lovely wants. . . . Well, darling. Won't you come home to bed?"

Herbert does not attend.

His mother sighed: a sigh of great appeasement and of content.—This is my son! She turned to where Esther sat with brooding eyes. Her face was serious now, grey ever, warm with a grey sorrow. Her lips moved: they knew not what to say.

"How are you, Esther?"

"Oh, I am well, Mrs. Rabinowich. Thank you." A voice resonant and deep, a voice mellowed by long keeping in the breast of a woman.

"Why don't you come round, sometime, Esther? You know, I should always be so glad to see you."

"Thank you, Mrs. Rabinowich."

"You know . . . we're just next door," the older woman smiled. "You got time, I think. More time, than I."

"Oh, she got time all right!" The sharp words flash from the soft mouth of Meyer, who sews and seems in no way one with the sharp words of his mouth. Esther does not look. She takes the words as if like stones they had fallen in her lap. She smiles away. She is still. And Lotte Rabinowich is still, looking at her with a deep wonder, shaking her head, unappeased in her search.

She turns at last to her boy: relieved.

"Come, Herbert, now. Now we really got to go."

She takes his hand that he lets limply rise. She pulls him gently.

"Good-night, dear ones. . . . Do come, sometimes, Esther—yes?"

"Thank you, Mrs. Rabinowich."

Meyer says: "Let the boy come when he wants. We love to have him."

His mother smiles.—Of course; who would not love to have him? Good heart, fine boy. "It's long past bedtime. Naughty!" She kisses him.

Herbert, a little like a horse, swings away his heavy head. They are gone in the bell's jangle.

"What a good boy : what a big-hearted boy," Meyer said aloud. "I like that boy. He will be strong and a success. You see."

Her words "I saw him lift the skirt of Flora and peep up" she could not utter. She was silent, seeing the dull boy with the dirty mind, and his mother and Meyer through love thinking him good. What she saw in her silence hurt her.

Her hurt flowed out in fear. She saw her child : a great fear came on Esther.—Flora is small and white, the world is full of men with thick lips, hairy hands, of men who will lift her skirt and kiss her, of men who will press their hairiness against her whiteness.

—There is a Magic, Love, whereby this shame is sweet. Where is it ? A world of men with hair and lips against her whiteness. Where is the magic against them ? Esther was very afraid. She hated her daughter.

### III

Meyer Lanich came down from his table and drew down the wide yellow shade and shut out the night. No more stray customers to enter. He turned the key of the door. He had his back to the door, seeing his work and seeing his child who now sat vacant upon the floor and grimed her eyes with her fists too sleepy to hunt play . . . seeing his wife. He sought to see this woman who was his wife. To this end came his words, old words, old words he had tried often, often failed with, words that would come again since they were the words of his seeking ■ find the woman his wife.

"Esther," he said, "it is nine o'clock and I have much work ■ do—a couple of hours of work. . . ."—I could work faster alone, ■ will be midnight so with this pain forever in my eyes. "Esther, won't you go home and put Florchen to bed ?"

She looked at him with her full lovely eyes. Why since he saw them lovely could he not see them loving ? He had said these words before, so often before. She looked at him.

"Esther," he said, "it is bad for a baby of four to be up so late. It ■ bad for her to sit around on the floor under the gas—smelling the gas and the gasoline and the steam of the clothes. Can't you consider Flora?"

"I am afraid."

"What is there to be afraid? Can't you see? Why aren't you afraid of what will happen to Flora? Eh—that don't frighten you, does it? She's a baby. ■ my Mother could see——"

"Meyer, I can't. Meyer, I can't. You know that I can't."

He waved his hands. She was stiff. They came no nearer one to the other. About them each, two poles, swirled thoughts and feelings: a world that did not touch the other.

He clambered back to his work. The room was hot. The gas light burned. Against his temples it beat harsh air, harsh light, the acrid smells of his work—against her temples.

Esther sat. The words of her man seeking the woman she was had not found for him but had stirred her. Her breast moved fast, but all else of her was stiff. Stiff, all she moved like a thick river drawn against its flow, drawn mounting to its head.—I cannot go home alone, through the empty hall alone, into the black rooms alone. Against their black the flicker of a match that may go out, the flare of a gaslight that is all white and shrieking with its fear of the black world it is in. She could not go home alone.—For, Esther, in your loneliness you will find your life. I am afraid of my life.

She was caught, she was trapped.—I am miserable. Let me only not move. . . . Since to move was to break against walls of a trap. Here in the heart of movelessness a little space. Let her not stir where the walls and the roof of the black small trap will smite her!

#### IV

The room moves up the dimension of time. Hour and hour and hour! Bearing its freight toward sleep. Thick hot room, torn by the burr of two lights, choked by the strain of two bound souls, moving along the night. Writhing in dream. Singing——

My flesh sings for silk and rich jewels;  
My flesh cries for the mouth of a king.  
My hair, why is it not a canopy of love,

Why does it not cover sweet secrets of love ?  
My hair cries to be laid upon white linen.  
I have brought misery into the world. . . .  
I have lived with a small man and my dream has shrunk him,  
Who in my dream enlarged the glory of princes.  
He looks upon me with soft eyes, and my flesh is hard against them.  
He beats upon me with warm heart, and my breasts do not rise up for  
him.  
They are soft and forgetful of his beating heart.  
My breasts dream far when he is near to them . . . They droop, they  
die.  
His hands are a tearful prayer upon my body. . . .  
I sit : there is no way between my man and my dream,  
There is no way between my life and life,  
There is no way between my love and my child.  
I lie : and my eyes are shut. I sleep : and they open.  
A world of mountains  
Plunges against my sleep. . .

—Lord, Lord : this is my daughter before me, her cheeks  
that have not bloomed are wilting. Preserve her, Lord. This  
is my wife before me, her love that has not lived is dead. . . . Time  
is a barren field that has no end. I see no horizon. My feet  
walk endlessly, I see no horizon . . . I am faithful, Lord. . . .

The tailor-shop ■ black. It has moved up three hours into  
midnight. It is black.

Esther and Meyer walk the grey street. In the arms of the  
man sleeps Flora. His arm aches. He dares not change her  
to his other arm. Lest she wake.

He has undressed her. Gentle hands of a man. He holds  
her little body, naked, near his eyes. Her face and her hands,  
her feet and her knees are soiled. The rest of her body is white—  
very white—no bloom upon her body. He kisses her black hair.

He lays her away beneath her coverlet.

There is his wife before him. She is straight. Her naked  
body rises, column of white flame, from her dun skirt. Esther  
—his love—she is in a case of fire. Within her breasts as within  
hard jewels move the liquids of love. Within her body, as  
within a case, lies her soul, pent, which should pour warmth  
upon them.

He embraces her.

" Esther . . . Esther. . . ." He can say no more.

His lips are at her throat. Can he not break her open ?

She sways back, yielding. Her eyes swerve up. They catch the cradle of her child.

—Another child . . . another agony of glory . . . another misery to the world ?

She is stiff in the unbroken case of a vast wound all about her.

So they lie down in bed. So they sleep.

She has cooked their breakfast.

They walk, a man and a woman, down the steep street to work. A child between them, holding the hand of a man.

They are grey, they are sullen. They are caught up in the sullen strife of their relentless way. There is no let to them. Time is a barren field with no horizon.

## GRANDMA

By THYRA SAMTER WINSLOW

Thyra Samter Winslow, born 1893, in Arkansas, U.S.A. Descended from a long line of Rabbis. Her great-grand-uncle, Joseph Kuttner, was the first Reform Rabbi in St. Louis, Missouri. At the age of seven she won a prize of a dollar for a child's story in the "St. Louis Globe Democrat," and in her 'teens worked on a newspaper in her home town. Afterwards became a feature writer on the "Chicago Tribune," and published stories in magazines.

Her books are "Picture Frames," a book of short stories; "Show Business," a novel; "People Round the Corner," and "Blueberry Pie," both books of short stories. Most of her stories had previously appeared in magazines, including "The American Mercury," "Bookman," "The New Republic," "Liberty." Has just completed a play (in collaboration with Arthur Richman), based on one of her short stories, "A Cycle of Manhattan."

### I

GRANDMA awoke with a start. She gained consciousness with the feeling that something was just about to happen. Then she sank back again on the pillow with a comfortable sigh of remembrance. Of course—this was the day on which she was going travelling.

Even on usual days, Grandma could not lie in bed, idle. So much more reason why she should be up and about, to-day, with so much to do. Her train left at twelve o'clock—she had had her ticket and her berth reservation for over a week, her trunk was all packed, there were just a few necessary articles to put into her bag—but the morning would be busy, as all mornings were at Fred's.

Grandma bathed and dressed hurriedly, her bent, rheumatic fingers grasping each hook and button with a nervous haste. As usual, she was the first one in the bathroom. This morning she was especially glad. For at Fred's, Grandma's second son's house, where she was visiting now, there was only one bathroom and there were eight in the family without her, if you count the two babies. II you didn't get in the bathroom first . . .

Grandma put on her neat house dress, as was her wont. She could change her dress later, and stuff the house dress into her bag. She arranged her thin, grey hair in neat waves around her face—she could smooth that again, too.

From a room at the other end of the house Grandma heard a baby commence to cry. It was Ruthie, Nell's youngest baby, just a year old, one of Grandma's two great-grand-children. Grandma loved little Ruthie a great deal, a fine baby—still, it did seem good that she wouldn't have to take care of her any more for a long time. Not that Grandma minded work—she had always worked, she liked something to do—but here at Fred's house there were so few moments when she wasn't working. Not that Fred's family were mean to her! Grandma would have been indignant if you had suggested that. Didn't they work as hard as she did, and harder? At seventy-three, Grandma was still strong and capable; no wonder they expected her to do her share and accepted it without comment.

Fred was a good son and a good husband and a good father. Could you expect much more? But Fred never had much of a business head. Here he was, at forty-nine, just about where he had been fifteen years before, book-keeper at the Harper Feed Store, a good enough position when times were better, but, with everything so high, Fred's salary didn't go very far. Still, no use complaining or worrying him about it, it was the best he could do. Fred never had had much ambition or "get up." It was a good thing he had bought the house, years before. It had seemed too big and rambling then. It was just about the right size now, though not so awfully modern—and quite hard to keep clean.

Emma, Fred's wife, was a good woman and a good house-keeper. She wasn't like the average daughter-in-law, either. She never quarrelled with Grandma about things—in fact, she was awfully kind, in her hurried, brusque way. Grandma sometimes wished she wasn't so quick about things, and decided—still, when one is as busy as Emma . . .

Emma was nearly Fred's age. They had been married twenty-five years, and she had always been a good wife to him. They had three children, all girls. Grandma had been sorry there couldn't have been a son to help Fred share the burden of supporting the family. But things seemed going all right now—a little

better than they had been, or so the family seemed to think—and, as long as they were satisfied . . .

Nell, Fred's oldest daughter, had married, four years before, and had gone to housekeeping. But Homer Billingsley, the boy she had married, had been sick for almost a year, so they had given up their little cottage and were living "with the old folks." They had two children now, Freddie and Ruthie, nice good children, too. Grandma liked Homer, Nell's husband, though she was sorry he was so much like Fred in his lack of ambition and power. Now that Homer was able to work again he had his old job at Malton's Hardware Store. There didn't seem much chance of his getting ahead there. Still, he was a good boy and awfully fond of Nell and the children.

Edna, Fred's second daughter, was stenographer at the First National Bank and made fifteen dollars a week. Edna was fine-looking, really the beauty of the family. She paid her board every week, but never had much left over because she bought Alice's clothes, too, and, of course being in the bank, she had to look nice herself. Alice, the youngest daughter, was seventeen and in High School. Grandma loved Alice, too. Of course, the child was thoughtless, she could have helped her mother a little more with the housework or Nell with the babies, but Grandma knew that, at seventeen, it's pretty hard to sweep floors or take babies out. After all, Alice was young, and she ought to have a good time.

While she stayed at Fred's house, Grandma did her share of the work. Even this last morning she followed her usual routine.

She hurried to the room where Ruthie lay and soon had her quieted. When Ruthie had her bottle—Grandma has learned all about sterilising, though she hadn't known there was such a thing when she brought up her own children—Grandma set the table, a plate, knife and spoon for each, salt and pepper castors that had been a wedding present to Emma and Fred, a butter dish with an uneven piece of butter in it, a sugar bowl containing rather lumpy sugar and a fluted sugar spoon, a dish of home-made plum preserves. She had the table all set when Emma hurried into the kitchen with a cheery, abrupt "Morning, Ma," and started the coffee.

At half-past seven all but Alice were ready for breakfast. Grandma had got the oatmeal out of the fireless cooker and boiled

the eggs for Homer, who was rather delicate and needed eggs for breakfast. When the family sat down to their meal, Grandma put milk and sugar on little Freddie's oatmeal and saw that he ate it—Freddie didn't like oatmeal much.

"Well, Ma," said big Fred, who sat comfortably coatless, "so to-day's the day you go travelling."

"Yes, it is," said Grandma, and smiled.

"You got a good day for it. Let's see, you leave Lexington to-day at noon and get to New York to-morrow at two, don't you?"

"Yes, Fred," said Grandma.

"You know," he went on, munching toast as he talked, "I believe you enjoy travelling, going places. Never saw anything like it. Seems to me a woman your age would want to settle down, quiet. You could stay here all the time if you wanted to, you know that. Got a room all to yourself—more than you get at Mary's—and yet, off you go, after four or five months. Here you've got a good home and all that."

"Well," said Grandma, in her gentle, even tones, "you know you aren't the only child I've got, Fred. There's Albert and Mary."

"Yes," Fred frowned. He disliked even hearing the name of Albert. It was the one thing that made him angry. "But we really want you, honest we do, Ma. Emma and the girls always miss you after you're gone."

"You bet," said Emma.

Grandma smiled. At least at Fred's home she was welcome and helpful. If she were only younger and stronger! At Mary's and Albert's there was a wordless agreement that her visits end, almost mechanically, at the end of four months. Only mere surface invitations of further hospitality were extended "for politeness."

Fred and Homer finished eating and hurried off to business. Alice came down, then, and Grandma served her, bringing in hot coffee and oatmeal, as Emma started to clear away the dishes.

Alice ate rapidly, then kissed Grandma good-bye—she didn't come home at noon—and skipped off. Grandma and her daughter-in-law washed the dishes and, when the dishes were done, they made the beds, one standing on each side, straightening the sheets and pulling up the covers simultaneously.

"Sure will miss you, Ma," said Emma. "Nell's no help at all. Don't blame her. Freddie tagging at her heels and the baby crying."

While Emma straightened up the downstairs rooms, Grandma helped Nell bathe and dress the babies. Then the express-man rang and Grandma hurried to the door, saw that he took her trunk and put the check in her purse. Then Grandma cleaned up the room she had occupied. It was time, then, for Grandma to get ready for her journey. Usually, she helped prepare dinner after these tasks were done, peeling potatoes, setting the table, for at Fred's one ate dinner in the middle of the day.

Grandma put on her travelling dress. ■ was her best dress, of soft, grey silk crêpe, trimmed with a bit of fine cream lace at the throat. Albert had given it to her on her birthday, two years before. Over this she put her best coat of black-ribbed silk, also a gift of Albert. She adjusted her neat bonnet—five years old, but made over every year and you'd never guess it.

Emma and Nell were too busy with dinner and the babies to go to the station with Grandma, but the street-car that passed the corner went right to the station, and Homer and Fred would be there to tell her good-bye. At eleven—Grandma believed in taking plenty of time, you never could tell what might happen on the way to the station—Grandma kissed Emma and Nell and Freddie and Ruthie, giving Ruthie a very tender hug and Freddie a hearty kiss, in spite of much stickiness from the penny lollypop he had been eating. She took her bag and, hurrying as fast as she could—Grandma took little, slow, rheumatic steps—she caught the surface car.

In the railway station Grandma sat down gingerly on one of the long brown benches, carefully pulling her skirts away from suspicious, tobacco-looking spots on the floor, and waited for Fred and Homer and the train.

Fred and Homer came up, together, puffing, just before the train was due. Homer presented Grandma with a half-pound box of candy and Fred gave her a paper bag filled with fruit.

When the train came in, Fred and Homer both assisted Grandma in getting on, took her to her seat and kissed her, loudly, before their hurried exit—the Limited stops for only a minute at Lexington.

Then, as the train moved away, Grandma waved a fluttering

good-bye to the two men and sighed again, with happiness. She was travelling !

## II

Not consciously, of course, for she never could have admitted such a terrible fact ; Grandma looked forward, all year, to her days of travel. Usually, each year contained three trips, each of about the same length, and these days were Grandma's golden milestones. Not that she wasn't happy the rest of the time—of course she was—but this—well, this was different.

At Fred's now—Grandma was happy at Fred's, of course, everyone was friendly and pleasant, though her feet and head and sometimes her back ached at the end of the day. One isn't so young at seventy-three, and younger people are apt to forget how tired seventy-three becomes, after innumerable answerings of the door, step-climbing and dish-washing. Grandma loved being useful, of course, but she did wish that there was a little more leisure, a little time to sit down and rest—if only Fred's and Albert's homes could be combined, in some way !

Grandma had three children. When they were young there had never been much money, but Grandma had tried to do her best for them. They had lived in Lexington then, and the three had been brought up just alike and yet how differently they had turned out ! There was Fred, quite poor but happy, still in Lexington, where he was born. Mary had married John Falconer when she was twenty-four and had gone to St. Louis to live, and Albert, the ambitious one of the family, had gone to New York in search of fortune, and had found part of it, at least.

If only Fred and Albert hadn't been so foolish and quarrelled, years ago ! But they had. Albert had tried to give Fred advice and Fred had resented it. They had made up the quarrel, but there was nothing that Fred would let Albert do for him, even if Albert had wanted to do something. Fred liked to refer, in scorn, to his elder brother as "that New York millionaire," and say things about being "just as well off if I haven't got his money." But then, Albert probably forgot, most of the time, that he had a younger brother. Outside of a polite inquiry, when Grandma arrived, he never referred to Fred at all. It worried Grandma to think that her children weren't good friends, but she knew she

could never do anything to make them feel differently. Years and circumstances had taken them too far apart.

Grandma had no favourite child, unless it was a slight, natural leaning toward her only daughter. She liked Albert and was glad she was on her way to visit him. She just wished that Albert wasn't so—well, so cold. He didn't mean anything, of course. When one is busy all day on the Stock Exchange one hasn't time for other things. And, when one is as rich as Albert, there are so many things to take up one's time. Albert was awfully good to Grandma. She told herself that many times. He asked her if she needed anything, whenever she visited him. He frequently gave her expensive presents. She wouldn't take any more money from him than she had to, and her wants were simple, for that wouldn't have been right, though she let him give her some on her last visit and had given it to Nell for Horner—he had been sick then—without letting Fred find out.

Grandma liked it all right at Albert's. How could there be anything to complain of? At seventy-three, Grandma had learned to make the best of things. Albert was Grandma's oldest child and now he was fifty-two. His ménage consisted of his wife, Florence; their two children, Albert, junior, who, at twenty-four, was being taught the business of Wall Street; their daughter, Arlene, twenty, and six servants.

The Albert Cunninghams lived in a very large apartment in Park Avenue. Mrs. Cunningham was of rather a good New York family. Albert had met her after his first taste of success and had been greatly impressed with her and her antecedents. Even then Albert had learned to look ahead. The family had had some years of social strivings, but now lived rather quietly. Arlene had made her début the year before and now entertained and went out quite a little. Albert, junior, was rather a serious fellow, though he, too, enjoyed the social life that was open to him. Altogether, they were fairly sensible, decent people, a bit snobbish, perhaps, very self-centred, but with no really objectionable features.

The thing that Grandma couldn't understand nor enjoy in the Albert Cunninghams' family life was the, to her, great coldness and formality. Grandma's idea of how a family ought to live was the way Fred's family lived, only with more money and more leisure and more pleasure and a servant or two—friendly, jolly,

intimate. At Albert's, the life was strangely lonely and distant. Grandma never felt quite at ease nor at home. She had no definite place in the family life. She had the fear, constantly, that she was doing something wrong, much more so than at Mary's, where her acts were criticised and commented on. No one ever gave Grandma a harsh word at Albert's. Albert, dignified ; Florence, courteous, calm ; Junior, a young edition of his father ; Arlene, gentle, distant, quiet—were all kind to Grandma. But most of the time they unthinkingly ignored her. She didn't fit in, she knew that.

At Albert's, Grandma had her own room and her own bath, as did each member of the family. There was no regular "family breakfast." Albert and Junior breakfasted about nine, going to the office in the closed car. Florence and Arlene breakfasted in their rooms. Grandma had gone to the dining-room for breakfast, on her first visit there, eight years ago, after Grandpa died and her own modest home had been broken up. But Florence decided that it would be more comfortable for Grandma if she breakfasted in her room. So each morning, about nine, Grandma's tray was brought up to her by Florence's own maid, Terry, who asked, each time, "If there is anything I can do?" Grandma rather resented a personal maid. Wasn't she able to bathe and dress herself, even if she was seventy-three? Grandma was always dressed when Terry knocked.

All day there was nothing for Grandma to do at Albert's. She couldn't help at all around the house. She found that out at her first visit. There was no darning nor mending to be done—a sewing woman came in regularly to do the things that Terry could not do. Albert didn't care for the home dishes that had once delighted him, and the cook didn't want anyone bothering around the kitchen. Grandma had luncheon at one, with Florence and Arlene, when they were at home, which was seldom enough. In the afternoon, on nice days, Grandma went for a drive, unless the cars were being used. Usually Grandma went alone, getting real pleasure out of the things she saw ; sometimes Florence went with her. Florence, too, occasionally took Grandma to teas and receptions and musicales, most of which bored Grandma and at none of which did she feel at home.

Grandma wondered where all of the old ladies were in New York. She seldom saw any. At the theatre, where she was taken

once in a while, she would see white-haired old dowagers, carefully marcelled and massaged, in evening gowns with very low-cut bodices. Grandma didn't mean that kind of old lady. She was always looking for comfortable old ladies, with neatly-parted hair, ample old ladies with little rheumatic hands and wrinkles, but she never found them.

Dinner, at Albert's, was at seven. When the family dined alone, at home, the meals were about the same, good things to eat, but everything so cold and distant. It was hard for Grandma to remember just what to do, so that Florence and Arlene wouldn't think she didn't know, though they were always polite and gracious. Grandma was constantly afraid she would spill things when the maid presented the silver dishes to her or that she'd take too large a portion for politeness. Grandma was served first—she couldn't watch to see the way the others did.

When the family was having a real dinner party Grandma found that it was easier for everyone if she had a tray in her room. She really liked that just as well—it was nice, seated at the little table in her room, comfortably unannoyed by manners. About half of the time the Albert Cunninghams did not dine at home—Arlene and Junior went to numerous dinners and even Florence and Albert had frequent engagements. Then Grandma usually dined alone in the big, empty dining-room, a little, lonely figure amid empty chairs, silver and glass. She would have preferred a tray in her room, then, but didn't like to mention it—this arrangement seemed to suit Florence. Grandma's meals were always excellently prepared and served, but eating alone in a big, still room isn't very jolly.

After dinner, Grandma was occasionally included in some social affair, but nearly always she was supposed to sit in the library until about nine or ten and then retire, as the other members of the family sometimes did when they were at home. The family saw that Grandma was given interesting light fiction and magazines full of stories and current events, but Grandma had never had enough leisure in her youth to find time to learn to enjoy reading. She could read only a short time without falling asleep.

Grandma knitted, too, so she was glad when the fad came back so she could be modern in something. Albert's family approved of knitting, and on the last visit her old fingers had

made many pairs of socks and sweaters for charity. Now she was glad to be able to get to knitting—she had had no time for it since she had been there before.

Yes—Albert and his family were awfully nice—of course, they didn't mean anything when they paid no attention to Grandma, when their days went on as serenely undisturbed as if she were not there. They asked her how she felt, nearly every day, a cool "Trust you are well this morning, Mother," and gave her presents. But thinking of the lonely hours in her room, the tiresome evenings, the long, useless, dragged-out days, Grandma wasn't enthusiastic over her visit with Albert.

### III

Mary, Mrs. John Falconer, Grandma's youngest child, had always been a bit her favourite. Mary still lived in St. Louis, where she had gone after her marriage. The Falconers had four children, two sons of eighteen and fourteen, two daughters, sixteen and eleven. John Falconer, a lawyer of moderate means, was quite stingy in family matters. Although he had a great deal more money than Fred, the family occupied a much smaller house, though it was modern and in a good neighbourhood, and Grandma had to share the bedroom of the two daughters. Mary's family had an advantage over Fred's in having one maid, who did all of the cooking and washing and some of the cleaning, so there was not so much for Grandma to do. Grandma felt that she should have been very happy with the Falconers. But they were disagreeable people to live with. Grandma tried not to see their faults but it was not easy for her to be contented during her visits there.

The Falconers had the habit of criticism. Nothing was ever just right with them. Mary always told Grandma that if it hadn't been for Grandma's encouragement she would never have married John Falconer—if she had waited she probably could have done much better. John Falconer was a former Lexington boy whom Mary had met when he was visiting his old home. Grandma didn't remember that she had encouraged the match except to tell Mary that John was a nice boy and would probably make a good husband—Mary had been the one who seemed enthusiastic. But somehow, Grandma was blamed whenever John showed disagreeable characteristics.

Mary was dissatisfied with her social position, with the amount of money John gave her to spend, with her children. She spoke slurringly of Albert and "his rich family who are in society." Mary would ask Grandma innumerable questions about the way the Albert Cunninghams lived, copy them when circumstances permitted and later bring the unused bits of information into the conversation, with disagreeable slurs.

"I guess Albert wouldn't call this dinner good enough for him, would he? It's a wonder you are satisfied here, Mamma, without a butler to answer the door or a maid to bring breakfast to your room," or "It's a wonder Albert and Florence wouldn't do something for Irene. I bet she's a lot smarter and better-looking than their stuck-up daughter. But not a thing does he do for her, except send a little box on Christmas—gave Irene a cheap wrist-watch last year—you could buy the same kind right here in St. Louis. He could keep it for all I'd care."

The four Falconer children were badly brought up and noisy. They interrupted each other and all talked at once. At meals they reached across the table for dishes of food. The one maid had had no training and, as she did the cooking, her waitress duties consisted of putting bowls and platters of food on the table. Then John Falconer made a pretence of serving, always, after one or two plates, he'd "pass the things around so you can all help yourselves."

As there was no attempt to show Grandma any special favour—she was never served first, the first plate going to the person in the greatest hurry to get away, frequently Tom the eldest son—usually when the bowl or platter reached Grandma there was little left for her. Grandma didn't mind this, unless the food happened to be a favourite—she had become accustomed to little sacrifices while raising her family. There was always enough bread and butter.

What Grandma did object to at Mary's was the spirit of unrest, the unkindness, the disagreeable taunts of the family, the noise and disorder. Everyone criticised Grandma, calling her attention to the way she held her fork, though their own manners were frequently insufferable. They criticised, too, Grandma's pronunciation of words, idioms of Lexington, and errors in grammar. These were made much of and repeated with laughter. Then, too, if Grandma showed ignorance of any modern appliance or invention,

this was thought to be a great joke and was introduced as a titbit in the table conversation.

Grandma darned all of the stockings at Mary's—there always seemed to be a basketful—and took care of the bedroom in which she slept, relieving the two girls of an unwelcome duty. She straightened the living-room, for Mary hated housework and grumbled about it and the overworked maid never quite got through her round of duties. But Grandma was not too busy at Mary's. She liked having something to do. It was the taunts that made her unhappy, the little barbed things the family said. John Falconer made Grandma feel that she was an actual expense, that the amount of food she ate was a real item in the household budget. Mary came to her with little whines about the relatives—though they lived in other cities and paid little attention to her—about her husband, how stingy he was, how much better she could have done, had she not taken her mother's advice in her marriage, about the children, how much money they spent, how they quarrelled with each other, how disobedient they were. Grandma always went from Mary's home to Fred's, and though she knew the work that awaited her, the tired hours in store, she actually looked forward to the next visit.

#### IV

So now, Grandma was travelling again. And, as the train covered the miles away from Lexington, Grandma put aside the worries of the visit she had just had, the memories of the unpleasantness of the visit with Mary, the apprehensions of the visit that awaited her. Grandma shed, all at once, all of these things, and emerged, a wonderful, new personality, a dear, happy little old lady, travelling. Grandma became, as she always became, three days of each year, the woman she would have liked to have been, the old lady she sometimes dreamed she was.

First, Grandma rang for the porter. She was well supplied with money, for Albert always sent her a cheque for travelling expenses. She loved feeling independent, a personality. When the porter came, Grandma demanded, in the gentle, well-bred tone Florence might have used, that the porter bring her an envelope for her bonnet, a pillow for her head, a stool for her feet. She tipped him generously enough to make him grin his thanks

and hurry to her whenever she rang. There were even porters who said, "Yes'm, you travelled on my car before," when they saw Grandma.

From her bag, Grandma took out a small, black, lace cap, with a bit of perky lavender ribbon on it and adjusted it on her thinning hair. At Mary's house they were always telling her how thin her hair looked, the young boy even hinting about old people who ought to wear wigs. Albert had sent her the cap in her Christmas box, and, as usual, she had saved it for travelling. Grandma put on, too, a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. She had needed them for years, but at first a sort of pride in her good eyes had kept her from getting them. Then, at Fred's, she had been too busy; at Albert's, no one paid much attention to her needs; at Mary's they had laughed at her near-sightedness without offering a corrective. When she was at Albert's, last year, she had told him, finally, her need of glasses, and the next day Florence had driven her to an oculist. But she felt that she had annoyed and disturbed Florence, that getting glasses for an old lady wasn't just Florence's pattern of things.

Grandma put the cheap candy and the fruit from Fred and Homer into her bag. It had been awfully kind and good of them. She took out her knitting and added row after row, as the minutes passed.

Then Grandma rang for the porter again. But, before he came, she looked at her fellow passengers, as she always looked at them when she travelled. Two seats in front of her sat a tired-looking woman of about forty, with a thin, drawn face. Knitting in hand, Grandma took slow, careful little steps up the train to her.

"How do you do?" said Grandma, with her sweetest smile. "I wonder if you won't have tea with me, keep an old lady company? It seems so—so unsocial, having tea alone."

The woman gasped and looked at Grandma. She saw the well-dressed, comfortable little old lady, with the frill of soft lace at throat and wrists, a tiny black cap on her grey hair, grey knitting in her gnarled hands, a picture-book Grandma for all the world.

"Why, yes, I—that would be delightful," she said.

Grandma led the way back to her own seat. When the porter

came she ordered tea and toast and little cakes and sandwiches, "and some of that good orange marmalade you always have on this road."

Grandma hadn't had any lunch but she didn't say so. When the little table was adjusted and the tea things brought in, Grandma poured tea, as if, every day, in her own home, the routine included the serving of tea at a dear little tea-table.

Grandma listened sympathetically to the other woman's story. Grandma knew that each woman who was travelling had a story and would tell it, if encouraged at all, but she wasn't much interested—she had heard so many stories during the past years. Then, when her guest had finished, Grandma talked.

Grandma didn't say much, really. She told about her visits, about her two wonderful sons and her splendid daughter. As Grandma told these things, they, too, emerged into beauty; the journey threw a magic over them as it did over Grandma. The things she told were so real that Grandma believed them, herself, because she wanted to.

"I have three children, so, of course, I spend four months of the year with each of them. Each of them wanted me all the time—they are such good children—so the best way seemed to be to divide the time. I'm on my way to visit my older son now. Maybe, as you've lived in New York, you've heard of him—he has a seat on the Stock Exchange and is a director in so many things—Albert Morrell Cunningham. His wife was a Mornington, and they have two such wonderful children, a boy and a girl. Arlene made her debut last year, so you can imagine what a good time she's having and what fun it is to be there with her, she's so popular and pretty. I'll show you her picture later. Each day I'm there, nearly, they do something for me, a drive in the park, theatres and concerts. I really get too gay in the city—it's wonderful.

"Then I go to see Mary, my only daughter, and you know how a mother feels toward a daughter. She is married to a lawyer in St. Louis, and they have four of the dearest children. The oldest, a boy, is eighteen, and the youngest, a girl, is eleven. Quite an ideal family, isn't it? Mary's husband is quite well-to-do, but they live so comfortably and simply, no airs at all. Mary doesn't care a great deal for society, just wrapped up in her husband and children, but she goes with such nice people.

"I've just come from my second son, Fred. And there—perhaps you'd never guess it, people have flattered me so long about looking youthful that I believe them—but I've two great-grandchildren, the older three years old, the younger just a year, the dearest things. Nell, the children's mother and her husband and the children are all living right at home. Fred and his wife won't hear of them going away. They were housekeeping for a while, but the family didn't like it—they are all so devoted to the children. There are two other girls in the family besides Nell and they have a great big old-fashioned home, set way back in a broad lawn, lots of trees and flowers. Yes, it's Fred's own home. It's a good thing he bought such a big one, years ago, he needs it with so many young people. They do have such good times together—and, of course, it's young people who keep us all young, these days."

Then, from her bag, Grandma drew a bundle of photographs. The photographers, from the maker of the shiny products of Lexington to the creator of the soft sepias of Fifth Avenue, had, with their usual skill at disguise, smoothed away the lines of discontent on Mary's face, the bold impudence of her children, had added a little kindness and humanness to Florence and Albert, had made Fred's family look placid, undisturbed and prosperous. The pictures showed Grandma's family to be all she had said of them, even to the dimpled little Ruthie, taken just a few weeks before, on a postcard by a neighbourhood photographer.

It didn't sound like bragging, as Grandma told things. It was just the simple, contented story of an old lady of seventy-three, who spent her days satisfied and serene, travelling from one loving and beloved set of relatives to another.

When tea was finished, Grandma allowed the other woman to return to her seat with a gentle nod and a "thank you for keeping an old woman company." Then Grandma knitted and looked at the passengers again. Always, whenever she travelled, out of the set that presented itself, Grandma was able to find those she needed.

A tiny, plump little woman with a too-fat baby was seated just a seat or so back of Grandma, on the left. It was to her that Grandma went now.

"May I hold the baby?" she asked. "I know how tired you must get, holding him all day, on a day like this. I've got two

great-grandchildren. Your baby is just about in between them in age, I think. Sometimes, I hold them for just a little while, and I know how heavy babies can be."

Deftly, Grandma took the child in her arms and settled him comfortably.

"When dinner is announced," said Grandma, "you go in and eat. I'll take care of the baby. It will be a rest for you—it is so difficult travelling with a baby—you'll enjoy your dinner more, alone. Sometimes, when we go on picnics with my great-grandchildren . . ."

Grandma told about the babies, about their mother, about her own grown-up children, whom she visited. She even told little things about their childhood, as mothers tell to mothers, but, always, she came back to the present, telling of her visits, encased in the rose colour of her journey. Not that Grandma told deliberate falsehoods. She didn't claim servants or wealth for Fred, nor jollity for Albert. But each fact she brought forth was broidered with the romance that travel brought to Grandma—the stories all showed Grandma welcome, beloved, happy, made her children kind, considerate, affectionate, successful, capable. Grandma helped her listeners, too, for she spread some of this haze over them. You can't envy, you must enter into the pleasure of it, when an old lady of seventy-three shows you the treasures that a lifetime has handed to her.

Grandma smiled as she sat with the little mother and her baby. And she smiled as she held the heavy, squirming bundle, while the mother ate dinner.

"It's a real pleasure to help you even a little," said Grandma, as the woman came back from the dining-car to claim her baby and thank Grandma.

Grandma washed her face carefully before she went in to her own dinner. She took a clean handkerchief from her bag, dainty, lavender-bordered, the present that Edna, Fred's second daughter, had given her last Christmas. On it she sprinkled a bit of perfume, a gift from Alice, two years before. She smoothed her hair, brushed the dust from her wrist. A new adventure always awaited her in the dining-car.

She walked with stiff little steps the length of the three cars, holding tight to the seats as she passed. And, through the cars, she smiled at the children and to grown-ups, smiles a bit patron-

ising, perhaps, as smiles should be from such a distinguished, contented old lady.

In the diner, Grandma was seated across from a stout, middle-aged man, who was eating an enormous meal. She smiled at him. He couldn't misjudge her—one doesn't flirt that way at seventy-three.

"It's a wonderful day for travelling, isn't it?" she said. "Last time I travelled, four months ago . . ."

Grandma was telling of her children, of her journeys.

Grandma ordered carefully—a steak, you are really safe about steaks when you travel, a fresh vegetable, a green salad, a bit of pastry, black coffee. Grandma ordered as if the ordering of a dinner were a usual but precious rite. She felt correct, prosperous, a woman of the world. The man across the table, pleased with his meal and moved a bit by Grandma's story of her happy and fortunate life, her devoted children, saw in Grandma the things that made this devotion. He even grew a bit gallant.

"I can see why your children are so good to you, ma'am. It makes me wish I had a grandma or mother like you myself." This during mouthfuls.

Grandma was equal to it.

"Why me, I'm just what my children have made me. Just think of you, making such lovely speeches to an old lady. You're deserving of the best mother a man ever had, I'm sure."

There were more pretty speeches. The man became almost flowery. Grandma actually blushed, before she paid her check, adding her usual generous tip—the stranger had offered to pay, but Grandma wouldn't have that, of course. Then, as Grandma arose, the man opposite rose too, and courteously escorted her through the cars and to her seat, stopping for a moment to talk.

Grandma couldn't knit at night. The motion of the car and the electric lights were not a good combination for her old eyes. She put her knitting into her bag and extracted a deck of cards, flamboyant, with green and gold gift-looking backs. She chose now two young women and a good-looking young man in his early thirties. She approached them all with the same question.

"Wouldn't you like a game of bridge? It seems so lonely, an evening alone, in a sleeper. . . ."

Strangely, all three did play bridge and would like a game. The porter brought a little table again, and they played, rather

indifferently, to be sure—Grandma was no expert and one of the young women played even a poorer game than she did—but several hours passed pleasantly. Then, after they stopped playing, Grandma brought the fruit from her bag. Grandma told them about Fred bringing the fruit to her, and as they ate she told, too, of her visits, of her children, her grandchildren, and the two little great-grand ones. The three card-players really seemed interested, so of course the photographs were brought out for a round of approval.

After the guests had gone to their seats, Grandma had her berth made up. She was rather particular about this—she wanted it made with her feet to the engine. Grandma thought this knowing about head and foot gave her a travelled air. Besides, she really didn't like to feel that she was travelling backwards.

In the dressing-room she put on her violet, silk dressing-gown, a gift from Florence three years before, which she kept carefully for travelling, and a frivolous little cap of cream lace, to keep the dust out of her hair while she slept. She spread her ivory travelling articles in their leather case—five years old on her last birthday—before her, and, as she prepared for sleep, talked pleasantly with the woman who happened to come into the dressing-room while she was there.

Grandma slept fairly well for travelling, waking up frequently to pull up the shade and look out on the hurrying landscape, the occasional lights, the little towns. She thought it was mighty pleasant travelling.

She was up at seven and dressed swiftly. A new woman had got on during the night and now occupied the seat opposite Grandma, a well-gowned woman in her late thirties, with a smart, city-like air.

Grandma nodded a pleasant good morning.

"We seem to be making good time," she said.

"Yes, indeed," the woman smiled, "pleasant day for travelling."

With the air of one born traveller to another, Grandma talked a bit, then motioned the woman to sit beside her. The pleasant conversation gave Grandma a warm feeling of well-being. She suggested breakfast, and the two of them went in together, the younger woman steadying Grandma just a bit when the train swayed around a curve.

It was a pleasant breakfast. Grandma ordered three-minute eggs. They were the way she liked eggs best, but she seldom had them. At Albert's it seemed so self-assertive to ask for things like that, special directions and everything—and at Fred's and Mary's!

Grandma and her new friend talked about New York, about plays they had both seen the year before. They discussed food and the cost of living, servants, the usual things that two hardly-acquainted women talk of, when circumstance throws them together. There was nothing condescending in the new acquaintance's attitude. Why should there have been? Grandma was neither an unnecessary member of a cool, indifferent household nor an overworked old woman—she was the ideal Grandma, cultured, clever, kindly. It was no wonder, then, that, after breakfast, the two of them should loiter in Grandma's seat and Grandma should show a few family photographs and dwell, pleasantly, on how fortunate she was in having such splendid sons, such a lovely daughter and such wonders of grandchildren, to say nothing of the two babies.

Then the woman suggested that she and Grandma go to the observation car, and, before long, Grandma was seated in a big chair, knitting again, and glancing at the flying scenery.

All the morning, Grandma's former acquaintances came to talk to her. The thin woman with the sad face offered her some candy. Grandma had a little chat with the plump mother and the baby and held the baby again while his mother ate luncheon. The stout man, reading a magazine, dropped it long enough to come over and ask Grandma how she was feeling and if there was anything he could do for her. Grandma's bridge companions, now well acquainted, with the sudden friendship that travel brings, gathered around Grandma for a chat, laughing at everything. Several others, coming into the car, stopped for a word with Grandma.

Grandma and her latest acquaintance had luncheon together too. Then, after luncheon, Grandma prepared, a whole hour ahead, as she always did, for the end of her journey. She washed off as much of the soot as she could. She took off the little lace cap and replaced it with her decent old bonnet, which had been resting in its bag all this time. She slipped on her black travelling coat over her grey crêpe dress. She took out a clean handkerchief,

sprinkling a bit of perfume on it. Before closing her bag, Grandma took out the cheap candy that Homer had brought to the station and gave it, with a gracious smile, to the woman with the baby. It was good to be able to give something—and, besides, what could she do with the candy at Albert's? She didn't care for candy and even the servants would have laughed at it.

Grandma closed her bag then and sat waiting. Her chance acquaintances passed, nodded, smiled and talked. Grandma was a real person of importance, a dear, happy old lady, with a devoted family, spending her life contentedly divided among them. Didn't all these people know about Grandma? Hadn't they heard of her children and her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren? Hadn't they seen their photographs, even? Didn't they know that, after four pleasant months with Fred and his happy, jovial family, she was on her way to visit Albert, rich and prominent and kind?

The train drew into the Grand Central Station. Grandma, trembling a little—for the excitement of travelling is apt to make one tremble at seventy-three—allowed the porter to brush her coat, bade farewell to her train acquaintances, followed her bag down the aisle and into the station.

A man in a chauffeur's uniform took Grandma's bag and, addressing Grandma politely, gravely, told her that Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham were sorry, but engagements prevented them from meeting her. They would see her at dinner at seven.

Grandma, with short, unsteady little steps, went out to the waiting car. There was something very near a tear in her eye. After all, travelling has its difficulties when one is seventy-three. The shell of radiance, of smiling independence, of being cared-for, important, loved, fell away. Grandma was just a little, tired, lonely old lady again. Another of Grandma's romantic journeys was over.

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## A SEDER NIGHT

By HEINRICH HEINE

*Translated by Elkan N. Adler*

Heinrich Heine, born in 1797 in Duesseldorf, Germany, died in Paris, 1856. One of the world's greatest writers, an immortal. His life was one of difficulties, material and physical. Government office in Germany was denied him because he was a Jew. His writings in which he expressed his ardent admiration of Napoleon made him unpopular in Germany. His outspoken and often bitter criticisms added to his unpopularity, and in 1835, the sale of his work was prohibited throughout Germany. He became baptised in the belief that this would enable him to escape discrimination on account of his Judaism, "a misfortune, not a religion," as he described it, but he soon repented his step, taken without any faith in Christianity, and he scourged himself bitterly for turning renegade. Some of his most Jewish utterances, his finest Jewish works, his most admiring statements about Judaism and Jews came after that step had been taken. "I never returned to Judaism," he wrote afterwards, "because I never left it." The last eight years of his life he was a complete physical wreck, confined to his "mattress grave," though he continued to write some of his most beautiful and most deep-felt poems during these years.

IN the large room of his house sat Rabbi Abraham and commenced the celebration of the Passover Eve, in company with his relatives and pupils and other guests. Everything in the room was brighter than usual. The table was covered with a silk-embroidered cloth, with golden fringe trailing to the ground. The little plates glittered pleasantly with their symbolic food, as did also the high goblets filled up with wine, and graven entirely with sacred subjects. The men sat in black mantles, and flat black hats and white ruffs. The women wore marvellous shimmering stuffs of Lombardy, and on their head and neck ornaments of gold and pearls; and the silver Sabbath lamp shed its festive light upon the devoutly happy faces of young and old. On a raised seat, leaning against a cushion of purple velvet, reclined Rabbi Abraham and read and chanted the *Hagadah*, and the gay choir

joined in or responded at the appointed places. The Rabbi, too, was attired in a gala dress of stately black, his noble, yet somewhat severe features looked milder than usual, the lips smiled out of his brown beard as though they wished to tell many charming things, and his eyes seemed to swim with beatific memories and anticipations. The beauteous Sara, who sat on another raised chair by his side, wore, as hostess, no jewelry ; only white linen enfolded her slender form and devout features. Her face was touchingly beautiful, as indeed the beauty of all Jewesses is of a strangely moving sort. The consciousness of the deep misery, bitter insult, and unhappy state in which their relations and friends live, spreads over their graceful faces a certain painful earnestness and watchful affectionate anxiety, that wondrously bewitch our hearts. So sat to-day the beauteous Sara, for ever gazing into her husband's eyes. Now and then she looked at the *Hagadah* which lay before her, a beautiful book bound in gold and velvet, an old heirloom with aged wine-spots from her grandfather's days. There were ever so many bold and brightly-painted pictures in it, which, even as a child, she had been happy to look at on the Pesach night, and which represented all sorts of bible stories. Such as Abraham, with his hammer, smashing his father's stone idols, and the angels coming to visit him, and Moses killing the Egyptian, and Pharaoh sitting on his throne, and the frogs which gave him no rest even at table, and he, thank God, drowning while the children of Israel carefully walked through the Red Sea, and they, standing open-mouthed, at the foot of Mount Sinai with their sheep and kine and oxen, and then pious King David playing the harp, and last, Jerusalem, with the towers and minarets of the Temple illumined by the sun.

The second Cup had been filled, faces and voices were growing more cheerful, and the Rabbi, as he seized one of the unleavened cakes, and with a happy greeting held it up, read out from the *Hagadah* the following words : " Behold ! This is the bread our fathers have eaten in Egypt ! Let everyone who is hungry come and eat ! Everyone who is sad, let him come and join in our Pesach feast. This year we celebrate it here, but next year in the land of Israel. This year we are still slaves, but next year we shall celebrate it as the sons of freedom."

Here the door opened, and two tall pale men entered, wrapped in big cloaks. " Peace be with you," said one of them. " We

are co-religionists on our travels, and would like to keep Pesach with you." And the Rabbi answered quick and friendly, "With you be peace. Seat yourselves near me." The two strangers sat down to table and the Rabbi proceeded with his reading. Sometimes while the others were repeating the responses after him, he whispered affectionate words to his wife. Playing on the old saw that on that night every Jewish housefather thinks himself a king, he said "Be joyful, oh my Queen!" But she answered with a melancholy smile, "Our prince is missing," and by that she meant a son of the house who, as a passage in the *Hagadah* requires, has in fixed phraseology to ask his father the meaning of the feast. The Rabbi made no answer, but with his finger pointed at one of the pictures on the open page of the *Hagadah*, which portrayed very agreeably how the three angels came to Abraham to announce that he would have a son born to his wife Sara, and Sara standing behind the door of the tent listening with womanly artfulness to the conversation. The hint brought a fiery blush to the cheeks of the lovely woman. She cast down her eyes and then looked up again lovingly at her husband, who was now chanting the wondrous tale of how Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Azaria, Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Tarphon sat reclining in Bene Brak, and conversed all night about the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt, until their pupils came and announced to them that it was day, and the people were already saying the morning prayer in the Synagogue. As the lovely Sara listened reverently with her eyes on her husband, she saw his face suddenly transfixed with horror and the blood leave his cheeks and lips, and his eyes start out like icicles. Yet almost at the same moment his features resumed their former repose and cheerfulness, his lips and cheeks grew red again, his eyes sparkled joyously once more, and he himself seemed mastered by a mad mood, most strange in him. Sara was terrified as she had never been terrified in her life before, and an icy shudder ran through her, less because of those signs of blank horror she had observed in her husband's face for a single instant than for this present exhilaration of his, which gradually turned to roaring merriment. The Rabbi jocosely shifted his beret from ear to ear, pulled at his beard and curled it waggishly, and sang the text of the *Hagadah* like a street song. When recounting the Egyptian plagues, where the index finger ■ dipped into the full glasses and

the drops of wine shaken off on to the floor, the Rabbi besprinkled the younger girls with the red wine, and there was much grumbling for spoiled ruffs, and much resounding laughter. To Sara this boisterous but forced merriment seemed more and more uncanny, and seized by unmentionable fear she stared at the crowd of guests rocking themselves to and fro, or nibbling the crisp cakes, or gulping down the wine, or chatting with each other, or singing out aloud, all very merry.

Then came the time for supper, and everybody stood up to wash the hands, and beauteous Sara brought in a large silver basin, richly chased with golden figures and held it before each of the guests, while the water was poured over their hands. When she came to offer the Rabbi this service, he looked meaningly at her and slung out of the door. Sara followed him, and the Rabbi hastily seized his wife's hand. Hastily he dragged her through the dark streets of Bacharach, hastily through the city gate to the high road which leads along the Rhine to Bingen.

The Rabbi then stood still awhile, he moved his lips several times, but they uttered no sound. At last he exclaimed : " Do you see the Angel of Death ? Down there, he hovers over Bacharach. But we have escaped his sword. Praise be to God ! " And then, in a voice still quivering with horror, he related how he was cheerfully singing the *Hagadah* as he sat there, reclining, when suddenly he glanced by chance beneath the table and saw at his feet the blood-stained body of a child. " Then I noticed," added the Rabbi, " that our two last guests did not belong to the community of Israel, but to the congregation of the ungodly, and they had contrived to introduce the corpse into our house in order to accuse us of the child murder, so as to rouse the populace, and to plunder and murder us. I dared not let it be noticed that I had seen through the hellish plot. I should have only hastened our destruction ; only craft has saved us both. Praise be to God ! Do not fear, Sara. Our friends and relations will be safe. It was only my blood for which the villains thirsted. I have escaped them, and they will content themselves with my silver and gold. Come with me, Sara, to another land ! The God of our fathers will not forsake us ! "

## HANSJORG AND HIS PIPE

By BERTHOLD AUERBACH

*Translated by M. TAYLOR*

Berthold Auerbach, born 1812, in the Black Forest, Germany. Died 1882. His "Tales of the Black Forest," published in 1843, made him the most famous German writer of his day. His books ran through many editions and were translated into all the European languages. Gladstone wrote the foreword for the English edition. It was an epoch-making work in German literature.

Auerbach was a fervent German patriot, and took a keen interest in promoting the unification of Germany. During the Franco-German War, the Duke of Baden a great admirer of Auerbach, appointed him to his headquarters. He was fervently attached to his Judaism, and the two dominant motives of his life and work were his love of the Black Forest and his love of Judaism.

A complete edition of Auerbach's collected works in twenty-two volumes, was published in 1863-4.

THE following story is connected with those eventful times when the successes of Napoleon were filling Europe with terror. That was indeed an extraordinary period. Every peasant, as he stood at the door of his own house, might see the history of the world pass in review before his eyes ; kings and emperors played their parts with the rest, and appeared in various shifting dresses and attitudes. The view of all this mighty spectacle cost the peasant frequently nothing more than house and home, and sometimes also his life. It fared better with my neighbour Hansjorg ; but I will tell the story from the beginning.

It was in the year 1796. Living in these days of peace, as still as mice, we can scarcely form an idea of the disturbed state of things at that period ; people seemed to have no settled home, and the whole human race to be wandering about and driving one another hither and thither. Through the Black Forest marched and counter-marched the Austrians, with their white military jackets, then the French, with their merry and red trousers, then again the Russians, with their long beards ; while,

mingling with them all, might be seen Bavarians, Württembergers and Hessians, in every kind of form and dress. The Black Forest was always an open door to the French, and it is only now that an attempt is at length made to bolt it.

There was consequently a retreating and advancing, a firing of musketry and roar of cannon, until folks scarcely knew whether their heads were still on their shoulders ; in truth they often enough rolled off ere their owners were aware. Not far from Baisingen, in the middle of the open plain, rises a hillock, as high as a house, and beneath it they say is a heap of dead soldiers, French and German, lying side by side.

My neighbour Hansjorg, however, escaped being made a soldier, notwithstanding that he was a smart and stout young fellow, who might show himself anywhere, and had just entered his nineteenth year. This happened from the following occurrence. On the day before the wedding of Wendel the mason, whose wife came from Empfingen, Hansjorg rode with the others behind the cart, in which sat the bride-elect upon the blue-painted chest, surrounded by all the goods and chattels, with her distaff and a spick-and-span new cradle by her side. Hansjorg kept firing his pistol like the very devil, always loading it with a double charge. When the procession reached the lime kiln, where, on the right ■ the pond, and on the left the tilemaker's cottage, at the door of which Katherle was standing, Hansjorg fired again ; but at the same instant a heart-rending shriek was heard ; the pistol dropped from his hand, and Hansjorg himself would have fallen from his horse had not his comrade Viteli held him up. It was now seen what had happened : Hansjorg had shot off the forefinger of his right hand at the middle joint. He was lifted down from his horse ; everyone ran up to him compassionately, and Katherle came running from the tilemaker's cottage, and almost fainted away when she saw the wounded man. But Hansjorg bit his lips with pain, and stared into Katherle's face. He was now carried into the house of the tiler. Old Jockel of Schenbuss, who was famed for his skill in stopping blood, was speedily summoned, while Viteli ran to the town for the doctor.

When old Jockel entered the room there was silence in an instant, and all drew back to make way for him, ranging themselves in two rows, through which he walked up to the wounded man,

who was lying upon a bench behind the table. Kätherle alone stepped forward and cried, " For God's sake, Jockel, help Hansjorg ! " The wounded man opened his eyes and turned his head toward the speaker ; and when Jockel now stood before him, and muttering something gently touched his hand, the blood all at once stopped flowing. This, however, was not from any power of Jockel's, but the magic of Kätherle's voice, which had such a charm for Hansjorg, that he no sooner heard it, than he felt the blood rush back to his heart, and thus the finger stopped bleeding.

The doctor came, and Hansjorg's finger was dressed ; he behaved throughout this painful trial like a hero. Some hours later, as he was lying in the fever consequent upon the wound, it seemed to him as if an angel were hovering over and fanning him. He did not know that it was Kätherle, who sat beside him, keeping the flies from his face, and almost touching his cheek. The hand of one whom we love, when brought close to us, although not in actual contact, has a kind of magic influence, and this it may have been which occasioned the dream of our friend Hansjorg.

As Kätherle sat beside him, she remarked that Hansjorg's closed lips were continually puffing and blowing in his sleep ; and the first thing he asked for as soon as he awoke, was—his pipe. Hansjorg had the most beautiful pipe in the whole village, and we must look at it a little more closely, as it forms one of the chief features in our story. The pipe had a speckled bowl of Ulm ware, in the brown marbled colours of which one's fancy might easily trace any fantastic form or figure. The silver top was shaped like a helmet, and polished so bright that you could see yourself in it, with the additional advantage of seeing your face doubled and turned upside down. The bowl was also mounted with silver ; a little double silver chain served instead of the cord to attach the short tube to the long curved mouth-piece. Now was not this a beautiful pipe ? And had not Hansjorg good reason to love it as a hero of old his shield ?

The first thing that troubled Hansjorg, in the loss of his finger, was that he could no longer stop his pipe cleverly. Kätherle laughed at his fondness for such a toy ; nevertheless, she filled and stopped him a pipe, fetched a live coal to light it, and herself drew a wry face as if she were sick. Hansjorg thought

he had never before relished a pipe so much as this which Kätherle had filled and smoked.

■ Although it was the height of summer, Hansjorg was not allowed to be carried home, but was obliged to stay at the tile-maker's house. This was all very pleasant to our patient ; and although his parents came to nurse him, he knew that there would be times when he would be alone with Kätherle.

■ The next day was the wedding of Wendel the mason ; and when the bell tolled for church, Hansjorg lay on his bed whistling an accompaniment to the wedding march which was heard coming up the road.

After church, the band of music went round the village, playing before the houses in which the prettiest girls or such as had sweethearts lived. The lads and lasses then joined the procession, which grew as it advanced. When they stopped before the tiler's house, Viteli, as Hansjorg's comrade, came up with his sweetheart, and offered in the place of the wounded man to take Kätherle with them to the dance. She thanked him kindly but excused herself, saying that she had work to do and must remain at home. Hansjorg was rejoiced at this in his heart, and when they were alone he said, " Kätherle, do not be disappointed ; there will soon be another wedding, and at that we two will have a right good dance together."

" A wedding ! " said Kätherle sorrowfully, " what do you mean ? "

" Come here, Kätherle," said Hansjorg, smiling. She drew nearer to him, and he continued : " I will confess all to you, Kätherle ; I wounded my finger purposely that I might not be made a soldier."

Kätherle shrank back, shrieked, and covered her face with her apron.

" Why do you cry so ? " said Hansjorg, " are you angry ■ what I have done ? You must not blame me, for you are the cause of it."

" Gracious heavens ! " exclaimed Kätherle, " no, no, I am indeed innocent of it. Oh, what a crime you have committed, Hansjorg ! You might have killed yourself. No, you are a madman ; I could not marry you,—I am afraid of you."

Kätherle was running away, but Hansjorg held her fast with his left hand. She stood thus, trying angrily to snatch her hand

from him, turned her back, and bit the corner of her apron with vexation. Hansjorg would have given anything in the world for her to have looked at him once ; but as all his entreaties were vain, he let go her hand, hoping that she would look round. Still she remained silent, and turned away her eyes. Then, in a trembling voice, he said, " Katherle, will you be kind enough to fetch my father ? I will go home."

" No, no, you must not," answered Katherle quickly, but still turned from him ; " you might catch cold, and that would be dangerous the doctor says."

" If you do not fetch some one, I shall go by myself," said Hansjorg.

Katherle turned round, her eyes were filled with tears, and she looked at him with an expression of eager entreaty and tender and earnest love. Hansjorg seized her hand ; it was hot and feverish, and he looked long and anxiously into her face. She was not what is properly called beautiful, but a stout, buxom lass ; her face, as well as her whole head, was of an almost round shape ; her brow was high arched, and her eyes were set deep in the head ; while the little turned-up nose, with somewhat of a comical and pert expression, and the round, plump cheeks, bespoke a healthy constitution. Hansjorg looked at her, as she stood glowing before him, and thought she was the greatest beauty in the world.

For a long while they held one another by the hand, without speaking a word ; at length Katherle said, " Shall I fill you a pipe ? "

" Do so," said Hansjorg, and he let go her hand.

This offer of Katherle expressed their reconciliation in the most forcible manner ; they both felt this, and not a word more was said of their little disagreement.

In the evening came a number of the lads and lasses, with glowing cheeks and eyes beaming with pleasure, to fetch Katherle to the dance ; but she could not—maybe she would not—go. Hansjorg smiled to himself ; but when he asked Katherle, as a kindness to him, to go with the rest, she hopped off gaily, and presently returned dressed out in all her holiday clothes.

But there was now a fresh difficulty in the way.

Notwithstanding the good nature of all the young folks, no one liked to stay away from the dance, to remain with Hansjorg. By good luck, however, just then in came old Jockel, and, for a flask of

good wine, which they promised to send him from the public house, he agreed if necessary to stay with Hansjorg the whole night.

The first day that Hansjorg was able to leave the house, he took a walk with Kätherle in the garden. Then he thought to himself how wickedly he had acted, and this weighed heavily upon his mind. After walking pensively along for some time, with downcast eyes, he looked up at Kätherle and exclaimed with emotion, "Kätherle, I see how wickedly I have acted, and I must go to confession; I must have the weight off my heart, and will gladly suffer any penance."

Kätherle threw her arms about his neck and kissed him; and at this moment he enjoyed that happiest absolution which a truly penitent mind, armed with a steadfast resolution, finds within itself.

The next Sunday Hansjorg went to confession: it was never known what penance he had to undergo.

Hansjorg repaired daily to the house of the tile-maker, drawn thither by his love for Kätherle. Many a time he left the cottage with a sigh, for he thought Kätherle seemed resolved to vex and master him. She was constantly entreating him to give up his pipe; she never allowed him to kiss her after he had been smoking; and whenever he went to see her, he was always obliged to keep his beloved pipe out of sight. In the tilemaker's room he was never on any occasion suffered to smoke; and, much as he loved to be there, he always left the house after a little while. Kätherle had good cause to joke and tease him for this.

Hansjorg fretted at Kätherle's obstinacy, and was more than ever wedded to his pipe. He considered it unmanly to be ordered about by a woman; women ought to yield, he thought; and then too he was obliged to confess that it was wholly impossible for him to give up his habit. He tried to do so once, for two whole days during the haytime; but he felt all the while like one fasting, and as if there was something of which he was perpetually in want. So he pulled out his pipe again, and as he sat holding it comfortably between his teeth, and striking a light, he said to himself: "No, no! Kätherle and all womankind may go to the devil before I'll give up smoking!" As he said this he struck his lame finger, and shaking his head with pain, he thought, "Nay, that is sinful, for I do not really mean it."

Autumn came at length, and Hansjorg was declared to be unfit for military service. Some of the other peasant-lads had imitated his artifice, and pulled out their front teeth, so as to be unable to bite the cartridge. But the military commission considered this an intentional trick, whereas Hansjorg's injury was looked upon as accidental, because it was dangerous. The toothless squad were therefore set to drive the carts and baggage-wagons, and had to follow to the war; and often, when munching the hard camp biscuits, they sorely deplored the loss of their teeth.

In the beginning of October, the French General Moreau made his famous retreat through the Black Forest. A division of the army passed through Nordstetten, and for many days previous the rumour of their approach was the only object of talk. The whole village was in the utmost alarm; no one knew what to do or to advise. A hole was dug in every cellar, and all the money and valuable things belonging to the family were buried. The girls brought their garnet necklaces, with the silver coin hanging to them; they drew the silver rings from their fingers, and put them all into the hole; not an ornament of any kind was to be seen; it was like a general mourning. The cattle were driven into an out-of-the-way spot at Egelsthal. The boys and girls looked at one another sadly when anything was said of the approaching enemy, and the lads would snatch involuntarily at the hilts of their knives, which peeped out of their breeches pocket.

But the Jews fared the worst. If the peasant is robbed of everything else, his field and plough cannot be taken from him. But the wealth of the Jews all consisted in moveable articles, in money and goods; and they were consequently in all the greater fright and alarm. The principal Jew in Nordstetten, a shrewd fellow, devised a cunning way to escape the danger: he set a large cask of red wine, well dozed with brandy, in front of his house, placed full bottles on a table beside it, that the uninvited guests might regale themselves. The plan succeeded, for the French were in great haste to proceed on their march.

The day of the passage of the French troops through Nordstetten arrived, and matters passed off better than had been hoped or expected. The village folks were collected in groups, gazing on the soldiers as they went by. First came the cavalry, and then followed an immense body of infantry.

Hansjorg had gone with his friends, Viteli and Xaver, to the

tilemaker's cottage, wishing at all events to be there to see that no harm happened to Kätherle. He went into the garden in front of the house, and leaning over the hedge puffed away at his case. Kätherle looked out of the window and said, "If you will not smoke, Hansjorg, you and your comrades may come in."

"We are very well off here!" replied Hansjorg, puffing three volumes of smoke from his mouth quickly, one after another, and nipping the pipe still faster between his lips.

Now came the cavalry; the soldiers all rode in disorder, and seemed hardly to belong to one another: everyone looked only to himself, yet nevertheless it was clear that they formed one body. Some of the soldiers cast an impudent look and kissed their hands to Kätherle. Hansjorg involuntarily seized the knife in his belt. Kätherle however shut the window, and only stole a glance from behind the shutter.

After the infantry came the baggage-wagons, and the wagons with the sick and wounded. This was indeed a heart-rending spectacle. One of the wounded soldiers stretched out his hand, which had only four fingers; the sight of this went to Hansjorg's heart, and he instantly fancied himself lying in the wagon. The wounded man had only a handkerchief tied round his head, and appeared to be half-frozen. Hansjorg quickly jumped over the hedge, took off his poodle-cap and stuck it on the poor fellow's head; then he gave him his leather purse and all the money in his pocket. The wounded man made signs with his mouth, ■ show how much he wished to smoke; he cast an imploring look at Hansjorg, pointing at the same time to his pipe, but Hansjorg shook his head.

Kätherle now brought out a loaf of bread and some shirts, and laid them on the wagon by the poor man's side. Her beaming look seemed to cheer the sick soldiers, and some of them gave her a military greeting, chattering together in their own language, and driving off with a friendly kiss of the hand. There was no longer any thought of friend or foe; these poor fellows were unfortunate, and in need of help, and everyone felt eager to render them assistance.

A large troop of horse-soldiers brought up the rear. Kätherle was again standing at the window, and Hansjorg and his comrades were at their posts. On a sudden Viteli exclaimed, "Look, look! the marauders are coming!"

Two ragamuffin-looking fellows, in half uniform, without saddle or stirrup, came galloping on. They stopped at a short distance from Hansjorg, spoke together and laughed. Then they rode slowly on, and one of them kept close to the hedge. Ratschel! In an instant he snatched the pipe from Hansjorg's mouth and darted off at a rattling gallop. The marauder stuck the pipe which was still alight, in his mouth, and puffed away lustily as if in bravado.

Hansjorg put his hands to his mouth ; it was just as if all his teeth had been pulled out of his jaw. But Kätherle set up a loud laugh and cried, " There's for you ! Now fetch back your pipe ! "

" Ay, ay, I *will* fetch it back," exclaimed Hansjorg resolutely, and snapping a bit of wood he had in his hand. " Come, Viteli, Xaver ! quick ! let's get out our horses and ride after the fellows ; come what may, I'll not give up my pipe to the villains."

His two comrades darted off to the stable to fetch the horses ; but Kätherle came running downstairs, and called Hansjorg into the passage. He went unwillingly, for he was vexed that she had laughed at him. But Kätherle, trembling, seized his hand and said, " For God's sake, Hansjorg, let the pipe go ! I will do everything you please—only take my advice. Will you risk your life for such a paltry thing as a pipe ? I beg and pray you to stay here."

" I will go," replied Hansjorg ; " and if a ball is sent through my head, so much the better ; what shall I do here ? You only laugh at me, Kätherle."

" No, no," exclaimed Kätherle earnestly ; and she fell on his neck ; " I *will* not let you go ; you must, you must stay here ! "

A strange feeling shot through Hansjorg's heart ; he looked at Kätherle and said boldly, " Will you then be my wife ? "

" Yes, yes, I will, indeed I will."

They embraced tenderly, and Hansjorg exclaimed, " Never, from this moment, shall a pipe come again into my mouth ; no sooner shall——"

" Nay, do not swear," said Kätherle, stopping him : " Cannot you keep your promise without such words ? And now will you stay here ? Leave the pipe to the Frenchmen and the devil ! "

Meanwhile Viteli and Xaver returned, mounted on their horses and armed with pitchforks, and shouted aloud, " Courage, Hansjorg, come along ! "

"I shall not go with you," said Hansjorg, still keeping his arm round Kätherle.

"What will you give us then to bring back your pipe?" asked Viteli.

"It shall be your own," he replied.

Away rode the two lads as hard as their horses could gallop towards Empfingen. Hansjorg and Kätherle looked after them. On the little hillock close to the lime-kiln Viteli and his comrade had nearly come up with the marauders. But when the latter saw themselves pursued, they wheeled about boldly, brandished their swords, and one of them presented a pistol. Viteli and Xaver no sooner saw this, than they likewise turned about in a trice, and galloped home even faster than they had come.

From this day forward Hansjorg never drew a whiff at a pipe. A month later the banns of marriage between him and Kätherle were read from the pulpit.

One day Hansjorg went to the tilemaker's cottage; he had taken the path round to the back, and no one had observed him. As he stood at the door, he heard Kätherle speaking with someone inside. "Are you quite sure you know it?" asked Kätherle. "Certainly I do," answered the other. Hansjorg recognised the voice of "the red-haired Maierle," a Jewish pedlar. "I know all about it well enough. Ay, ay, he could not have been fonder even of you, and I fancy he took up with you to console himself in his regret."

"Ah!" said Kätherle, "at any rate he will have a surprise on his wedding-day which he little expects. But can I depend upon ■ for certain?"

"I only wish I were as certain of dying worth a hundred thousand florins."

"But mind you, Hansjorg must not hear a word of it."

"Dumb as a fish!" replied the red-haired Maierle, and went his way. Hansjorg now entered the cottage and stepped timidly up to Kätherle; he was ashamed to confess that he had listened and overheard what had passed; but when they were sitting confidentially, side by side, he said, "Kätherle, do not listen to idle gossip—it is not true; once indeed it was said that I kept company with the maid at the Eagle, who ■ now at Rootweil; but, believe me, it was not true. I was then only a boy

at the Sunday school—it was nothing more than a childish prank.”

Kätherle made as if she attached great weight to this circumstance, and Hansjorg had much ado to set matters right again. He took all the pains in the world, till evening, to get the truth out of Maierle, but he remained “dumb as a fish.”

Hansjorg had now many taunts to bear, and in a manner to run the gauntlet through the whole village. It happened thus. On the Sunday before the wedding, Hansjorg and his comrade Viteli, according to old custom, each with a red riband tied round his arm and a red cockade stuck on his three-cornered hat, went through the village from house to house, and the bridegroom-elect repeated the following saying: “You are all politely invited to the wedding-feast at the Eagle on Thursday. If we can ever return the compliment we will do so. Come without fail: do not forget it; come without fail.”

Thereupon the goodwoman in every house opened her table-drawer, took out the loaf of bread and a knife, and handed it, saying, “Cut a slice.” Then they had to cut off a slice of bread and take it with them. Hansjorg cut the bread clumsily with his four fingers, and it pained him when in some of the houses the people said to him, with good-natured pleasantry, “Really, Hansjorg, you ought not to marry, for with your stump of a finger how can you cut bread?”

Hansjorg was vastly relieved when these invitations had come to an end.

The wedding was celebrated with singing and merry-making. The only thing omitted was the firing of guns; for since the accident of Hansjorg, this was strictly forbidden. All went on right merrily at the wedding-feast. As soon as dinner was over Kätherle disappeared; but presently she returned, holding the well-known pipe in her mouth! Indeed it was impossible to distinguish whether it was really the old pipe, or a new one exactly like it. Kätherle now gave a puff or two at the pipe, screwing up her face, and then reached it to Hansjorg, saying: “There, take it; you have kept your word bravely, and have shown that you can deny yourself. You may now smoke and welcome; I have no longer any objection.”

Hansjorg grew red as scarlet; but he shook his head and, said, “No, what I have once said is said; I will not swerve an inch; and never again, as long as I live, will I draw a whiff more.

But, Kätherle," he added, standing up, "can I kiss *you*, for you have smoked?"

Again they embraced. Then Hansjorg confessed that he had listened when Kätherle was talking with Maierle, and that he had fancied they were speaking of the maid at the Eagle. At this there was a hearty laugh.

The pipe was hung at the head of the bed of the young couple, and often Hansjorg pointed to it, to prove that with love and a firm resolution a man can do anything.

A word transports us at once many years in advance of our tale.

Hansjorg and Kätherle are now aged grandparents, happy in the circle of their children, and still vigorous and sprightly. The pipe ■ kept as an honoured heirloom by Hansjorg's five sons, not one of whom, or their children, has up to this day acquired the habit of smoking.

## THE SILENT WOMAN

By LEOPOLD KOMPERT

*Translated by D. L. Adler Hobman*

Leopold Kompert, born in Bohemia, May 1822, died in Vienna, November 1886. Studied at the Universities of Prague and Vienna, and was for some years tutor in the house of Count George Andrássy. Was a member of the Vienna City Council, the Board of the Vienna Jewish Community, and was active in the Israelitische Allianz of Vienna. From 1848 to 1852 was Editor of the "Oesterreichischer Lloyd." A creator of Ghetto literature, his stories of the life of the Bohemian Jews have become classical. A complete edition of Kompert's works in eight volumes appeared in Berlin in 1882-3. They have been reissued.

IN a brightly-lit house in the Jewish quarter a wedding was being celebrated and the night was filled with the sound of revelry. It was a night in spring, warm but dark, and there was a light shuddering rain, fit accompaniment for an occasion so fraught with possibilities for good or evil as is marriage. Not that people troubled much about evil in the good old days of long ago. They had their share of sorrow, just as we have, and often enough were harshly buffeted by Fate ; but they were able to rejoice wholeheartedly, bold swimmers plunging into a tide of joy, like the wedding-guests that night.

"I would empty my pockets to-night, even if I knew that it would take my last penny." Those were the words of wealthy Reuben Klattauer, the bride's father. And indeed, it looked as though his last penny had taken wings and turned into great dishes laden with geese and pies. Ever since the wedding ceremony at two o'clock until nearly midnight the feast continued, and still servants were running up and down from one room to another. Such an abundance of meat and drink and all apparently twice blessed ! Firstly, because the supplies seemed to be inexhaustible and secondly, because people were still able to dispose of them.

In order to whet the appetite of the guests a dwarf had been

specially sent for from Prague, and even the most morose among them could not but be amused at his quips and pranks. Thou art dead now, good fool, thy jesting lips are silent ! But if all the laughter caused by thee shall intercede for thee at the throne of God, then the most pious of Rabbis would not be surer of his eternal happiness than thou !

After a time, the young people gathered in one of the rooms for dancing, and the dwarf's jests were drowned by the sound of fiddles and trumpets. The bride joined the dancers in her heavy silken gown and gold cap, with its fringe of lace hanging down over her features. She danced incessantly, with any man who asked her, and her steps were swift and wild. She never glanced at anyone, not even at the bridegroom, who stood by the door preferring the company of the dwarf to that of the dancers. So there was no one to notice her burning hands and panting breath, and in any case no one would have been surprised at such symptoms ; already the guests had begun to whisper and smile among themselves, and all of a sudden a cloud of old women swept into the room and while the musicians played their loudest, they whisked away the newly-wedded wife among them as if by magic. The bridegroom remained behind grinning foolishly, but eventually he too disappeared and the party began to break up to the accompaniment of stumbling footsteps, half-drunken voices, and a last thundering sally at some laugh of the fool from Prague.

Suddenly a scream was heard in the hall below and the departing guests, instantly sobered, crowded back into the rooms.

" God in Heaven ! " they cried in confusion. " What is the matter ? Is the house on fire ? "

" Gone, gone . . . she has gone ! " shrieked a woman's voice from below.

" Who ? Who has gone ? " they asked.

" Gone—gone ! " she screamed again, as she came up the stairs. It was Selde Klattauer, the bride's mother, her face deadly pale, her eyes staring, a candle in her clenched hand.

" In Heaven's name, Selde, what has happened ? "

They crowded about her and she muttered something, gazing at them uncertainly as though overwhelmed with shame.

" Nothing has happened, good people. In Heaven's name what should have happened ? "

" Then why did you scream, Selde ? " asked someone.

And suddenly she screamed again, heartrendingly : " She has gone. I believe that she has done herself some harm."

It was true—the bride had vanished.

When the bridegroom had gone into the dark bridal chamber he had not found her whom he sought. At first he had believed her to be merely coy, but when she still remained hidden he had called her mother. His wife had disappeared. Roused by this story, the guests were soon searching every nook and cranny throughout the house. They were full of tales of other brides who had been spirited away on their wedding-day and Selde Klattauer half believed, half resisted these legends, crying out : " No, no, good people, she has only gone away."

The guests, especially the mothers among them, started calling for their lanterns and torches, and hastened away from the house. Reuben Klattauer stood by the door, letting them pass him without a word. The last to leave was the jester from Prague ; when everyone had gone he went up to the unhappy mother and asked softly : " Tell me, Frau Selde, did she want him ? "

" Want whom ? " she cried, terrified at being alone with the dwarf.

" I mean, was your daughter forced into this ? "

" Forced ? Should we have forced her ? " said Selde uncertainly.

" Then you need not look for her," answered the jester with a smile of pity. " It would be best to leave her where she has gone." And with that he too went his way.

In the meantime she who had caused all the confusion had reached the end of her flight.

In a narrow little street next door to the Synagogue, lay the Rabbi's house in the shadow of great trees ; ■ was uncanny even by day and much more so at night, when timid souls believed that they could hear the whispered prayers of the departed, as they took the Scrolls of the Law from the Ark within the gloomy house of God. Down this silent street ran the bride, pausing at length before the Rabbi's house to see if she were being followed—but all was still and dread about her. A pale beam of light from the lamp before the Ark shone through a window of the Synagogue and she felt as though a supernatural eye were watching her ; panic-stricken, she seized the little iron hammer on the door and knocked. Her own heart-beats seemed to her to ring more loudly even than the hammer on the door.

The Rabbi had only dwelt within this silent house since his predecessor's death, a few months ago. He had come from afar, alone with his old mother, unknown and young ; he made up for his youthfulness, however, by his noble demeanour and wide scholarship. Even at that late hour he was poring over his books ; hearing the knock on his door, he called aloud : " Who is there ? "

" It is I, Rabbi," came the almost inaudible reply.

" Speak louder if I am to hear you," called the Rabbi.

" It is I—the daughter of Reuben Klattauer," she answered.

The Rabbi did not recognise the name. He hardly knew the members of his congregation as yet and did not once remember that this was the girl whom he had married that day.

" What do you want at this late hour ? " he demanded.

" Open the door, Rabbi," she answered in a trembling voice. " For I am like to die."

He drew back the bolt and in the darkness of the hall someone in shining array slipped past him, through the open door of his study. He closed the front door in amazement and followed her into the room ; he saw a girl seated in his chair, her bowed head turned from him, the lace of the golden wedding-cap hiding her face. In spite of his deep religious faith, the Rabbi shuddered.

" Who are you ? " he spoke in a loud voice, as though to banish the apparition which at that moment appeared to him like some nocturnal spirit.

She rose and replied in tones fraught with all the anguish of a human soul : " Do you not know me, whom only to-day, a few short hours ago, you married to a husband under the canopy ? "

The Rabbi stared at the girl. If she was no apparition, she might well be some distraught creature bereft of reason.

" If you are she," he said at last, hesitatingly, " why are you here, instead of where you belong ? "

Her answer came violently. " I know of no other place where I belong, save only here."

The Rabbi was completely bewildered. Was this indeed a mad woman ? Soothingly he replied : " The place where you belong, daughter, is the house of your parents, but to-day you have taken a husband, and therefore you belong to his house."

She murmured something unintelligible.

Still believing her mad, he asked her more gently even than before : " What is your name, child ? "

"Heaven above us!" she cried in bitter anguish. "He does not even know my name!"

"How should I know it?" he asked, almost apologetically.

"Am I not a stranger here?"

His calm manner had a soothing effect on her excitement.

"My name is Pearl," she said quietly, after a few moments.

The Rabbi felt that he was using the right tone towards her.

"What do you want of me, Pearl?" he demanded, approaching her.

"Rabbi," she answered dully. "There is a great sin on my soul. I do not know what I ought to do."

"What sin can you have committed?" he asked with a smile.

"It must be your imagination."

"No, no!" she cried passionately. "It is not imagination. I know well enough—I can see—what oppresses me. I could seize it in my hands now, for it lies before me. Is that imagination?"

"Very well then," he said, feeling that he must let her speak. "I agree that you are not imagining it. I will assume that you have sinned gravely. Have you come to confess your sin to me? Do your parents know of it, or your husband?"

"Who is my husband?" she exclaimed.

The Rabbi was filled with strange foreboding, and thoughts surged within his soul like waves in a turbulent ocean. Ought he to deal with her as a penitent sinner?

"Were you forced into your marriage?" he asked at last, with all the gentleness of which he was capable.

Her whole body shook with the sobs which she strove in vain to suppress.

"Speak, child!" he adjured her.

She spoke then, in a tone strange and remote such as the Rabbi had never heard before. "Yes, Rabbi, I will speak, even though it kills me. It would, indeed, be best if that could happen. No, Rabbi, I was not forced into this marriage. My parents never once said—you must. It was all done by my own will. My betrothed is the son of the richest man in the Community and I was dazzled by the thought of my position as his wife. It was nothing but that, Rabbi. I forced myself into it, hard though it was; but in my heart I hated him—the more he loved me, the more I hated him. But his gold outweighed everything and I wanted the position which he could give me."

"Go on," said the Rabbi, as she paused, exhausted. Her voice, her strange confession were like some magic spell cast over him, compelling him to listen.

"What more am I to say, Rabbi?" she asked. "I never lied, not as a child nor later, yet the whole of my betrothal seemed like one monstrous lie. But it was only to-day, Rabbi, as I stood under the canopy and he took the ring from his finger and put it on mine and I danced at my own wedding that I understood the lie—and then—— when they led me away——" At the end of her shame-faced confession, she moaned and her head sank lower on to her breast.

The Rabbi watched her in silence. This was no madwoman's speech; it was the remorse of a tremulous and self-aware soul. The emotion which she aroused in him was not pity, but rather a sympathetic comprehension; in spite of her broken and confused narrative he understood her. There was no need to explain her flight from her father's house at such an hour and for such a reason. He wanted to exclaim, "I understand you, child!" but all he said was: "Go on, Pearl."

The girl turned round. He had not yet seen her face, concealed behind the lace fringe of her golden wedding-cap.

"Have I not told you everything?" she asked with a touch of scorn.

"Everything?" he repeated. He was strangely embarrassed.

"Now it is your turn to speak!" she cried with sudden passion.

"What shall I do?"

"Pearl!" he exclaimed, horrified at her tone.

"It is your turn," she said again, and before the Rabbi could stop her she had flung herself down at his feet and was embracing his knees.

The golden cap was tossed back by her violent movement, revealing her strange beauty, and as though dazed by a flash of lightning the young Rabbi covered his face with his hands.

"What shall I do?" she asked. "Speak! Do you think that I will return to my father's house until I have had help? You alone in all the world can give me that. Look at me! I have my own hair still, just as God gave it to me; ■ has not been shorn yet. Was I to cut it off for my husband's sake? I am not his wife! I will not be his wife. Speak, speak—what must I do?"

"Get up, get up!" said the Rabbi in a broken voice.

"First speak. I will not get up until you have spoken."

"What can I say?" His tone was almost inaudible.

"Naphtali!" she cried.

The young Rabbi staggered to his feet. The room seemed to him suddenly full of light. He groaned like a wounded man and tore himself loose from the girl's grasp, so roughly that she fell with her head upon the floor.

"Naphtali!" she cried again.

"Be silent," he moaned. His face was hidden in his hands.

Again she called his name, but this time there was joy in the cry rather than pain, and once more he bade her be silent, so masterfully that she lay upon the floor as if spellbound.

The Rabbi began to walk up and down the room in great agitation, torn by conflicting emotions. She heard him sigh and stand still until his footsteps rang once more through the silent room as he resumed his rapid pacing. In the end he went over to the girl where she lay, hardly daring to breathe, and stood still before her. His expression revealed a strange calm—the calm after battle.

"Listen to me, Pearl," he said slowly. "I want to speak to you."

"I am listening, Rabbi," she whispered.

"Will you do as I bid you and not resist? I am going to say something most terrible."

"I will do all that you tell me, Rabbi," she cried. "I swear it. Only speak!"

"Do not swear yet, until you have heard what I have to say. I do not want to force you."

She made no reply.

He paused for a long while. At last he said: "Then listen to me, Pearl, daughter of Reuben Klattauer. You have a double sin upon your soul, each one so great that only a heavy penance can atone for it. Firstly, you allowed yourself to be dazzled by silver and gold—you forced your heart into a lie. With that lie you intended to deceive a man who trusted you completely and who took you to be his wife. A lie is a great sin—many rivers cannot wash it away; it makes men false and contemptible in their own eyes. The greatest evil in all the world was brought about by a lie. That ■ one sin."

She was weeping. "I know, I know."

"But that is not all," continued the Rabbi after a time and his voice shook. "You have committed another sin, even worse than that. You did not only lie to your husband, you have also brought sorrow upon someone else. You might have spoken and you did not speak. What can that man do now, when he knows what he has lost?"

"Naphtali!"

"Be silent—do not ever dare to say that name again! Your sin grows greater every time that you utter it. Why did you not speak when you might have done so? God will not lightly forgive your silence. You have broken that man's heart—he will never again know even the wish to be happy. God in His Heaven, Pearl, cannot pardon you for that!"

"Stop—stop," she moaned.

"Nay, Pearl, now let me speak!" he cried. "You wanted me to speak—now hear me out. This sin upon your soul, this twofold sin demands bitter atonement. God is long-suffering and merciful—He may look down upon your suffering and wipe out your guilt from His great book. But you must accept your penance. And this is what it shall be." He paused. He was about to utter the hardest thing which he had ever had to say in the whole of his life. "You were silent, Pearl," he continued at last, "when you should have spoken. From now on, you shall be silent before all the world. From the moment when you leave this house until I give you permission to speak you must be dumb—you must never utter one single word. Do you accept this penance?"

"I will do all that you tell me," she sobbed.

"Are you strong enough to bear this?" he asked her gently.

"I will be as dumb as though I were dead!" she cried.

"And there is one other thing. You belong to your husband now. Go home and be a Jewish wife."

"I understand," she answered weeping.

"Go home and bring peace to your parents and to your husband. The day will come when you may speak again, when your sins will be lifted from you. Until then, you must bear what has been laid upon you."

She lifted her head. "May I speak once more?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Naphtali!"

The Rabbi laid one hand over his eyes and motioned her to

cease with the other. She caught it between both hers and pressed it to her lips while her hot tears fell upon it. He bade her go at last, and his tone revealed that his spirit was broken.

She released his hand. The Rabbi took up the candle, but she slipped out ahead of him. He followed, closed the front door behind her and pushed the bolt into place.

Unseen as she had come, Pearl returned to her father's house. She found her mother huddled in a chair as though paralysed by the shock. A strange contrast this despair in the house of marriage to the joy with which it had been filled a few short hours ago!

When Pearl came back, her mother was too spent to cry out. She only remarked, "You have come at last then, daughter," as though she were returning from an unusually long walk. But when the girl made no reply, indicating by signs that she could not speak, the unhappy mother's terror was renewed and the house rang with her lamentations. Reuben Klattauer and the young husband, returning from their fruitless search, were equally horrified at the change in the girl, and believed her to have been afflicted by the hand of God.

And that was the beginning of Pearl's terrible penance.

Her condition had a curious effect upon the people in the ghetto. Those who had danced with her on her wedding-day, scarcely aware of her excitement at the time, suddenly recalled how distraught and wild she had been that night. They decided that the Evil Eye, jealous of her beauty, had caused the spirit of unrest within her: she must have been driven out into the night by some evil power—the victim of malevolent forces which choose such an occasion to assail mankind. God alone knew what she had seen that night—nothing good certainly, or she would not have been struck dumb. There were plenty of gruesome legends in the ghetto of similar experiences, yet people did not really believe the young wife to be dumb; they thought that she had been deprived of the power of speech by some great terror, and that the time would come when she would speak again. A woman's silence can be more eloquent than the loudest speech, and there are women, unable to bear the fret of petty annoyances, whose lips are sealed upon the soul's secret pain and upon the sickness of

incessant self-sacrifice. Pearl became known in the ghetto as the Silent Woman.

The course of her silent life cannot be told here save in the barest outline. She went with her husband to the wealthy house which had so dazzled her, and as his wife she had the position which she had coveted. People no longer wasted much pity on her. "Need we all have everything?" they would ask. "Some have one thing, some another." And they were right, it seemed. Pearl was a beautiful woman; she scarcely seemed to suffer under her penance and it had certainly not robbed her of her charms. She was able to laugh and rejoice, yet she never forgot to be silent.

Those first apparently happy days were no more than a prelude, however, to the time of trial and temptation which was to come. The start was easy, but the middle and the end were all the harder to bear. At first the marriage was childless, and people declared that this was a good thing, since a mother should be able to talk to her children. Eventually however, a little girl was born to her; but even when the infant which she had carried in her womb was laid at her breast and she listened to its first faint cry, she remembered and still was silent.

Silent she remained while the child grew up beside her in increasing loveliness; she did not speak even when the little arms were longingly held out to her, nor when the little hand, burning with fever, sought her own. She nursed the child in sickness and in health, yet never once forgot her penance. In time she bore another child, a boy who like his sister had inherited his mother's beauty. People said that any woman might well be proud of such children, and Pearl was indeed proud, and showed it by her radiant countenance, but where other mothers cannot find words sufficient to express their maternal joy, this mother—perhaps afraid lest by disobedience she might bring down a curse upon her children—never once departed from the rule of silence enjoined upon her.

The best years of her life passed by. She was still beautiful, a lovely rose beside her virginal daughter, whose hand was already being sought by many suitors. At such times many mothers are apt to talk too much and to interfere, but Pearl kept silent. Eventually a youth was chosen, and everyone admired the handsome young couple; but a few weeks before the wedding was to take place a malignant disease swept through the ghetto. Pearl's

daughter was struck down and in three days the bride was dead.

Pearl did not break her penance even then. When they bore her daughter to the cemetery, she uttered a cry which those who heard it never forgot, but not one word of lamentation passed her lips. While she sat on a low stool during the seven days of mourning the Rabbi came to bring consolation to the parents, but he addressed himself only to her husband, never to her. She did not dare to look up at him until he was leaving. His glance met hers—but he went away without a word to her.

After her daughter's death something within Pearl's spirit was broken. Her beauty faded within a few days, her cheeks growing hollow and her hair grey. Her friends wondered how she could survive such a blow, not knowing that her silence was like a band of iron which supported and upheld her. Moreover, she still had a son, and ■ him she clung with her whole being.

The lad was only thirteen, yet already the fame of his knowledge of Holy Writ had spread far and wide. He had been the Rabbi's pupil and had been treated by him with all a father's tenderness ; the Rabbi had predicted a great future for the gifted boy and he was to be sent to Hungary to study the Scriptures under one of the most famous teachers of the time. Pearl did not know whether she would ever see him again, yet she let him go out of her arms without a spoken benediction, her lips quivering in silent pain. Seven years passed and the lad returned home, a tall and noble youth. After her son's return it almost seemed as though her beauty were blossoming afresh. He had become famous and wherever he went people praised his modest bearing and his knowledge of the Talmud.

On the Sabbath after his return he was to give proof of his gifts in the Synagogue and people crowded into the House of God to hear his discourse. The women watched eagerly through the railings of the gallery ; Pearl sat in front where she could see all that was going on down below. She was very pale—all eyes were upon her, but she did not seem aware of it ; her limbs were heavy with a weariness such as she had never known before. It seemed as though she could scarcely keep awake, yet no sooner had her son mounted the steps before the Ark than a change came over her. As his opening words rang out her cheeks flushed ; she sat upright, her heart beating tumultuously. Her son continued to

she speak yet she hardly knew what he said, aware only of the murmur of applause, now soft, now loud from the men below. The congregation was carried away by the speaker's lofty sentiments and powers of oratory, and whenever he paused their applause swept through the Synagogue like a gale over a forest. The women around her were weeping, yet her own eyes remained dry. A stab of pain shot from her breast to her lips—forces were stirring within her which had to find an outlet. The Synagogue was full of the sound of voices, yet she felt that she must drown them all.

Her son ceased. Not knowing what she did, Pearl flung herself against the railing and cried aloud : " God, living God, may I not speak even now ? "

The cry was followed by deathly silence. Everyone knew the voice to be that of the Silent Woman. A miracle had occurred !

" Speak, speak ! " came the answering cry from the Rabbi, below among the men. " You may speak now ! "

There was no reply, Pearl had fallen back into her seat, her hands pressed to her bosom. The startled women around her thought that she had fainted, but she was dead. Those first words were her last.

The Rabbi died many years later. On his deathbed he told the people who stood around him the story of Pearl's strange penance. Every girl in the ghetto knows the tale of the Silent Woman.

## A SAVIOUR OF THE PEOPLE

By KARL EMIL FRANZOS

*Translated by M. W. MACDOWALL*

Karl Emil Franzos, born 1848, in Podolia, Russia, died in Berlin in 1904. His childhood was spent at Czortkov, in Galicia, the "Barnov" of his stories. Studied law at Vienna University, but afterwards entered journalism.

From 1882 to 1885 he edited the "Neue Illustrierte Zeitung" in Vienna. He wrote a great many books, not all Jewish in subject. His most important work, "The Fight for Right," 1900, describes the fight of a Bukovina farmer for what he considered his right, the conflict being between his race right and the law of the many-tongued Austrian Empire.

Nearly all Franzos's books have been published in English, French and other translations.

WHEN Barnov was in danger who was it that saved us? A timid little man whom no one could have imagined capable of a courageous action, and whose name I have only to mention to send you into a fit of laughter. It was little Mendele. . . Ah, see now how you are chuckling! Well, well, I can't blame you, for he is a very queer little man. He knows many a merry tale, and tells them very amusingly. And then it is certainly a very strange thing to see a grey-haired man no taller than a child, and with the ways and heart of a child. He used to dance and sing all day long. I don't think anyone ever saw him quiet. Even now he does not walk down a street but trots instead; he does not talk, but sings and his hands seem to have been given to him for no other use but to beat time. But—what of that? It is better to keep a cheerful heart than to wear a look of hypocritical solemnity. Mendele Abendstern is a great singer, and we may well be proud of having him for our *Chazan*. It is true that he sometimes rattles off a touching prayer as if it were a waltz, and that when reading the *Torah* he fidgets about from one leg to the other as if he were a dancer at the theatre. But these little peculiarities of his never interfere with our devotions, for we have been accustomed to

Mendele and his ways for the last forty years, and if any one happens to get irritated with him now and then, he takes care not to vent it on the *manikin*. He cannot help remembering, you see, that little Mendele can be grave enough at times, and that the poor *Chaxan* once did the town greater service by his gift of song than all the wise and rich could accomplish by their wisdom or their wealth.

I will tell you how it came to pass.

You know that a Jew is looked upon nowadays as a man like everyone else ; and that if any noble or peasant dares to strike or oppress a Jew, he can at once bring his assailant before the Austrian district judge at the court-hall and Herr von Negrusz punishes the offender for his injustice. But before the great year when the Emperor proclaimed that all men had equal rights, it was not so. In those old days, the lord of the manor exercised justice within the bounds of his territory by means of his agent ; but what was called justice by these men was generally great injustice. Ah, my friends, those were hard times ! The land belonged to the lord of the manor, and so did all the people who lived on it ; and the yard and the water were his also. It was not only in the village that this was the case, but in the towns, too, especially when they belonged to a noble, and when their inhabitants were Jews. The noble was lord of all and ruled over his subjects through his agent or *mandatar*.

At least it was so with us in Barnov. Our master, Count Bortynski, lived in Paris all the year round, and gave himself no trouble about his estates or their management. His agent was supreme in Barnov, and was to ■ intents and purposes our master. So we always used to pray that the *mandatar* might be a good man, who would allow us to live in peace and quietness. At first God answered our prayers, for stout old Herr Stephan Grudza was as easy-tempered a man as we Jews could have desired. It's true that he used to drink from morning till night, but he was always good-natured in his cups, and would not for the world have made anyone miserable when he was merry. But one day, after making a particularly good dinner, he was seized with apoplexy and died. The whole district mourned for him, and so did we Jews of Barnov. For, in the first place, Herr Grudza had been kind to everyone ; and in the second—who knew what his successor would be like ?

Our fears were well grounded.

The new *mandatar*, Friedrich Woollmann, was a German. Now the Germans had hitherto treated us less harshly than the Poles. The new agent, however, was an exception to the rule. He was a tall thin man, with black hair and bright black eyes. His expression was stern and sad—always, always,—no one ever saw him smile. He was a good manager, and soon got the estate into order ; he also insisted on the laws being obeyed ; taught evil-doers that he was not a man to be trifled with ; and I am quite sure that no one with whom he had any dealings defrauded him of a halfpenny. But he hated us Jews with a deadly hatred, and did us all as much harm as he could. He increased our taxes three-fold—sent our sons away to be soldiers—disturbed our feasts—and whenever we had a law suit with a Christian, the Christian's word was always taken, while ours was disbelieved. He was very hard upon the peasants, too—in fact, they said that no other agent at Barnov had ever been known to exact the *robot* due from the villein to his lord with so much severity, and yet in that matter he acted in his mode of procedure. But as soon as he had anything to do with a Jew, he forgot both reason and justice.

Why did he persecute us so vehemently ? No one knew for certain, but we all guessed. It was said that he used to be called Troim Woollmann, and that he was a Christianised Jew from Posen ; that he had forsworn his religion for love of a Christian girl, and that the Jews of his native place had persecuted and calumniated him so terribly in consequence of his apostasy, that the girl's parents had broken off their daughter's engagement to him. I do not know who told us this, but no one could deny the probability of the story who had ever looked him in the face, or had watched his mode of treating us.

So our days were sad and full of foreboding for the future. Woollmann oppressed and squeezed us whether we owed him money or not, and none that displeased him had a chance of escape. Thus matters stood in the autumn before the great year.

It isn't the pleasantest thing in the world for a Jew to be an Austrian soldier, but if one of our race is sent into the Russian service his fate is worse than death. He is thenceforward lost to God, to his parents, and to himself. Is it then, a matter for surprise that the Russian Jews should gladly spend their last penny to buy their children's freedom from military service, or

that any youth, whose people are too poor to ransom him, should fly over the border to escape his fate? Many such cases are known: some of the fugitives are caught before they have crossed the frontiers of Russia, and it would have been better for them if they had never been born; but some make good their escape into Moldavia, or into our part of Austrian Poland. Well, it happened that about that time a Jewish conscript—born at Berdieszow—escaped over the frontier near Hussintyn, and was sent on to Barnov from thence. The community did what they could for him, and a rich kind-hearted man, Chaim Gruenstein, father-in-law of Moses Freudenthal, took him into his service as groom.

The Russian Government of course wanted to get the fugitive back into their hands, and our officials received orders to look for him.

Our *mandatar* got the same order as the others. He at once sent for the elders of our congregation and questioned them on the subject. They were inwardly much afraid, but outwardly they made no sign, and denied all knowledge of the stranger. It was on the eve of the Day of Atonement that this took place—and how could they have entered the presence of God that evening if they had betrayed their brother in the faith? So they remained firm in spite of the agent's threats and rage. When he perceived that they either knew nothing or would confess nothing, he let them go with these dark words of warning: "It will be the worse for you ■ I find the youth in Barnov. You do not know me yet, but—I swear that you shall know me then."

The elders went home.—I need hardly tell you that the hearts of the whole community sank on hearing Woollmann's threat. The young man they were protecting was a hard-working honest fellow, but even if he had been different, it wouldn't have mattered—he was a Jew, and none of them would have forsaken him in his adversity. If he remained in Barnov, the danger to him and to all of them was great, for the *mandatar* would find him sooner or later—nothing could be kept from him for long. But if they sent him away without a passport or naturalisation papers, he would of course be arrested very soon. After a long consultation Chaim Gruenstein had a happy inspiration. One of his relations was a tenant farmer in Marmaros, in Hungary. The young man should be sent to him on the night following the Day of Atonement,

and should be desired to make the whole journey by night for fear of discovery. In this manner he could best escape from his enemies.

They all agreed that the idea was a good one, and then partook with lightened hearts of the feast which was to strengthen them for their fast on the Day of Atonement. Dusk began to fall. The synagogue was lighted up with numerous wax candles, and the whole of the community hastened there with a broken and contrite heart to confess their sins before God ; for at that solemn fast we meet to pray to the Judge of all men to be gracious to us, and of His Mercy to forgive us our trespasses. The women were all dressed in white and the men in white grave-clothes. Chaim Gruenstein and his household were there to humble themselves before the Lord, and among them was the poor fugitive, who was trembling in every limb with fear lest he should fall into the hands of his enemies.

All were assembled and divine service was about to begin. Little Mendele had placed the flat of his hand upon his throat in order to bring out the first notes of the "Kol-Nidre" with fitting tremulousness, when he was interrupted by a disturbance at the door. The entrance of the synagogue was beset by the Count's men-at-arms, and Herr Woollmann was seen walking up the aisle between the rows of seats. The intruder advanced until he stood beside the ark of the covenant and quite close to little Mendele, who drew back in terror, but the elders of the congregation came forward with quiet humility.

"I know that the young man is here," said Woollman ; "will you give him up now ?"

The men were silent.

"Very well," continued the *mandatar*, "I see that kindness has no effect upon you. I will arrest him after service when you leave the synagogue. And I warn you that both he and you shall have cause to remember this evening. But now, don't let me disturb you ; go on with your prayers. I have time to wait."

A silence as of death reigned in the synagogue. It was at length broken by a shrill wail from the women's gallery. The whole congregation was at first stupefied with fear. But after a time everyone began to regain their self-command and to raise their eyes to God for help. Without a word each went back to his seat.

Little Mendele trembled in every limb ; but all at once he drew himself up and began to sing the "Kol-Nidre," that ancient

simple melody which no one who has ever heard can forget. His voice at first sounded weak and quavering, but it gradually gained strength and volume, filled the edifice, thrilled the hearts of all the worshippers, and rose up to the throne of God. Little Mendele never again sang as he did that evening. He seemed as though inspired. When he was singing in that marvellous way he ceased to be the absurd little man he had always hitherto been, and became a priest, pleading with God for his people. He reminded us of the former glories of our race and then of the many, many centuries of ignominy and persecution that had followed. In the sound of his voice we could hear the story of the way in which we had been chased from place to place—never suffered to rest long anywhere; of how we were the poorest of the poor, the most wretched among the miserable of the earth; and how the days of our persecution were not yet ended, but ever new oppressors rose against us and ground us down with an iron hand. The tale of our woes might be heard in his voice—of our unspeakable woes and our innumerable tears. But there was something else to be heard in it too. It told us in triumphant tones of our pride in our nation, and of our confidence and trust in God. Ah me! I can never describe the way little Mendele sang that evening; he made us weep for our desolation; and yet restored our courage and our trust. . . .

The women were sobbing aloud when he ceased; even the men were weeping; but little Mendele hid his face in his hands and fainted.

At the beginning of the service Woollmann had kept his eyes fixed on the ark of the covenant, but as it went on he had to turn away. He was very pale, and his knees shook so that, strong man as he was, he could hardly stand. His eyes shone as though through tears. With trembling steps and bowed head he slowly passed Mendele, and walked down the aisle to the entrance door. Then he gave the soldiers a sign to follow him.

Everyone guessed what had happened, but no one spoke of it.

He sent for Chaim Gruenstein on the day after the fast, and giving him a blank passport said, "It will perhaps be useful to you."

From that time forward he treated us with greater toleration; but his power did not last long. The peasants, whom he had formerly oppressed, rose against him in the spring of the Great Year, and put him to death—

## A SHARE IN THE HEREAFTER

### *A True Story*

By MAX NORDAU

*Translated by* JOSEPH LEFTWICH

Dr. Max Nordau, born in Budapest, 1849, died in Paris, 1923. Son of Rabbi Suedfeld, but changed his name (Southfield) in 1874, to Nordau (Northfield). Doctor of Medicine, Zionist leader, orator, philosopher, playwright. The "Titan of the Zionist Congresses." His "Conventional Lies" which appeared in 1883, has run to seventy-one editions, and like most of his works, has been translated into nearly all European languages. His "Paradoxes," "Diseases of the Century," "Degeneration" and others of his works are equally famous.

The "Share in the Hereafter" has been translated from the original manuscript, kindly lent by Madame Nordau.

BEHIND the matchboard partition at the end of the big guest-room of the innkeeper, Ephraim Schlesinger, there were two men playing cards at a polished wood table. The inn lay at the end of the high street of the comparatively large village, that was no great distance from Lissa, in the Grand Dukedom of Posen.

It was a Saturday night, in February. The snow lay thick outside. Inside the room a fire was blazing in an overheated iron stove, from which a winding stove pipe rose in strange zig-zag fashion towards the ceiling and walls. A hanging lamp dimly illuminated the interior, that in addition caught the play of lights from another lamp on the wall behind the bar, and a third on the table in the corner reserved for honoured guests.

Half a dozen carters and peasants sat round the stove on wooden benches, spoke loudly in Polish, smoked clay pipes and spat copiously on the sanded floor.

The room reeked of paraffin, strong tobacco, low kitchen, and jackboots that were kept soft with train oil.

Ephraim Schlesinger, a little corpulent fellow, with a long tangled beard, tired eyes, and a big wart on the right side of his nose, shuffled backwards and forwards in his embroidered slippers,

greasy skull-cap, and long sleeved knitted vest, between the bar, the peasants and the two card-players behind the partition ; but he loved best of all to sit beside the card-players and watch their game, until one of his Polish customers called him away to serve another whisky.

Both players were Jews, elderly men, dressed in good Sabbath suits. One of them, Hirsh Guttmann, was a heavy, lumbering man, whose tremendous upper frame and bull neck, and massive bullet head sunk between his broad shoulders gave him even sitting down the appearance of a giant. The other, Reb Moshe Rosenthal, was lean, lanky, volatile.

Guttmann and Rosenthal were distantly related, as were almost all the Jews of that village community. Guttmann was a horse dealer and Rosenthal a cattle dealer. All the week they were away, going from one fair to another, dispersing the animals they had bought up from the peasants, and they returned each Friday to their families, to set out again as a rule on Sunday morning on their travels, to follow their vocation.

Hirsh Guttmann did not convey the impression of a man of spiritual quality. His fleshy mottled dull-red visage, the low forehead, the little blood-shot eyes, the bulbous nose, puffy lips, the big hairy ears, and the short stiff beard, suggested that beneath the thick curly hair, hardly yet touched by grey, there was little else beyond figures, dates of fairs, and the names of children. From his earliest days he had known nothing but horses, peasants, and at best estate owners and officers, some of whom addressed him familiarly and never spoke a word to him that did not relate to his horse dealing ; and his occupation with animals had made him almost an animal himself. Reb Moshe Rosenthal represented a higher species. He had been a "student" in his youth. He knew the Talmud, and also had a certain amount of secular education. He was to have been a rabbi, but circumstances had compelled him to take to trading. He continued, however, to have his cultural interests. He was a subscriber to the local paper, and also to a Jewish paper in Berlin. When he had time he pored over his Talmud folios, and consequently he was respected in the community. He was in addition, an observant, believing Jew, while the general opinion about Hirsh Guttmann was that he had little regard for the ritual observances. It was said that on the road he paid little heed either to his tephilin or the dietary laws,

and did not hesitate to share the meals of his peasant customers, in which ham played a considerable part.

But in the community, under the eyes of his friends and relatives, he was careful not to do anything objectionable. On Friday nights and Saturdays he went to Synagogue and even abstained from smoking, though this was very hard. At any rate he always waited impatiently for Saturday night to be able to light his pipe, and in the hour and a half that he was playing cards with Reb Moshe he had not let it go out once.

Hirsh was not a talkative man. He puffed clouds of smoke from his pipe, tossed down now and again a glass of Nordhauser from the bottle in front of him, and was absorbed in his cards.

Reb Moshe did not think it of any value to exchange ideas with his relative. He was playing cards because he wanted to be pleasant to him, because he wanted to make the long night shorter, and because he wanted to let his spirit wander, and he followed his own thoughts, as he sat there, sipping a little bottled beer from time to time, sucking a long cheap, unappetising-looking cigar that he was constantly letting go out, and then after some time relighted, and sending his greasy cards with a careful spinning movement to cover the last that Hirsh had just banged down with his fist on the table.

What conversation there was he carried on only with Ephraim Schlesinger, with abrupt intervals, whenever the innkeeper was able to sit down at the table to keep him company.

Hirsh had no luck this evening. He lost every game, and although the stakes were small, about five marks had already wandered out of his pocket into that of Reb Moshe. He grumbled and mumbled, as he again had to push the nickel coins in front of him over to Reb Moshe, and while he shuffled and dealt the cards he said :

"Moshe, you have the evil eye. Do you know that this fifty pfennig piece is all I have left ? "

"Put it down," said Reb Moshe, "and I'll have you cleared out in a minute, and then we'll adjourn."

"I'm going to win it all back again from you before I go home, you thief," answered Hirsh, and banged down the cards furiously. His anger was a source of amusement to Ephraim Schlesinger, who kept teasing him by scoffingly praising his play. Presently the game was finished. Hirsh Guttmann had lost and Moshe

Rosenthal, saying "More power to your elbow," deposited Hirsh's last little silver coin in his leathern purse, from which he at the same time took a few pfennig to pay his score.

"I won't let you go," cried Hirsh, pushing Reb Moshe as he was rising, back into his chair. "You are not going to be such a mean fellow as to run off with all that lot. I claim another game."

"Leave me alone," replied Reb Moshe, struggling to release himself from Hirsh's grasp. "You haven't any more money, so how are you going to play another game?"

"Won't you trust me, you miser?"

"Not with gaming debts," replied Reb Moshe.

"Lend me a mark," Hirsh said, turning to the innkeeper.

"I'll chalk up your Nordhauser," said he with a smile, "but you won't get any money out of me for playing cards."

"You're a dirty dog," Hirsh fumed. "There's the cripple Yanush outside. He'll be more obliging than you are."

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself," intervened Reb Moshe, "a respected householder to be asking a drunken peasant for a loan."

"All right," said Hirsh, "then I'll stake my silver watch."

"If you like. But this will have to be the end." And Reb Moshe picked up the cards, while Hirsh unfastened the big old-fashioned watch from the heavy silver chain, and laid it down on the table. Reb Moshe won again. He stuck the watch in his pocket, deciding to give it back to Hirsh, but not till the next day, lest he be tempted now to stake it again on a game of cards.

Hirsh was in a fury now. He was also drunk, with more brandy than he could stand, and there was only one thought in his mind now.

"Here is my wedding ring," he bellowed. "Let's have another game."

"Are you mad?" said Reb Moshe. "Your Betty will scratch my eyes out if I take your wedding ring, too."

He tried to move away. But Hirsh would not let him go.

"Look here," he said. "If you won't play for my wedding ring, let's play for my share of the hereafter."

The idea had come to him suddenly. He saw it both as a chance of getting another game, and at the same time shocking his orthodox relative as well.

Reb Moshe shook his head. "It is not right to jest about such things," he said.

"But I'm not jesting," Hirsh rejoined. "If you don't accept the stake, we'll know that you don't believe in the after-life."

"How do you intend to transfer your share of the after-life?"

"Why! We'll draw up a deed of assignment. Ephraim, we want some paper and ink."

Schlesinger, who thought it an excellent joke, put paper and ink in front of them.

"What value do you place on your share of the hereafter?" Reb Moshe asked Hirsh, who was busy drawing up in Hebrew characters a document formally renouncing his share in the afterlife.

"It won't be worth much," said the innkeeper, hinting at the rumours about Hirsh's dubious orthodoxy. "Let's say a mark."

"A mark!" cried Hirsh indignantly. "Am I an apostate? Have you caught me eating pork?"

"I haven't," said Schlesinger pointedly.

"Will five marks and your watch satisfy you?" asked Reb Moshe. He didn't like the whole business, and wanted to get it over quickly.

"You're getting a fine share in the after-life very cheaply," said Hirsh, not without wanting to betray a tendency to scoff, and deposited the deed and opened the new game.

He played with a sort of sardonic humour. Reb Moshe played with an anxious, earnest mien. The game fluctuated. Once, when Hirsh Guttman produced the trump card, he said jestingly:

"So my share in the after-life may be of some use to me, after all."

Reb Moshe had not wanted to win. But a kind of love of the game for its own sake, and the play of logical thought independent of the will, had intervened, with the result that he won again. He put away the document together with the watch and the money, and said:

"If you want your share of the after-life back, you can have it. You'll find me selling cheap."

"No. You keep it," scoffed Hirsh. "It is in good hands with you." He stood up, and stretched himself sleepily. As he was going out, he remarked in a loud aside to the innkeeper:

"If my share of the after-life happens to be in hell, Reb Moshe will find that he has made a bad bargain."

Next morning, Guttman and Rosenthal left the village in the usual way, to go about their businesses. On Monday afternoon

Reb Moshe returned home, and the first question he asked his Blume after he had kissed her, and asked about her health, was what news there was in the community.

"Just think, Moshe," she replied, "cousin Hirsh died yesterday at G——"

Reb Moshe went white and caught hold of the table at which he and his wife were standing, in order to steady himself.

"Hirsh Guttman!" he cried, and then in an almost inaudible whisper: "Boruch Dayan Emes (Blessed be the Just Arbiter)."

"Yes, Hirsh Guttman," said his wife. "But what ails you, Moshe? Are you ill?"

"No, I'm all right. I've just come in out of the cold," Reb Moshe mumbled, unbuttoned his fur coat, and sat down, wiping off the perspiration that had suddenly bathed his forehead. "How did it happen?"

"It is market-day at G—to-day," his wife explained. "Hirsh was drinking brandy in the inn there last night with the peasants, and then, as he was going out, he had a stroke at the door, and fell dead."

"Without confession, without any of his own people there," said Reb Moshe, speaking to himself, and then relapsed into silence. After a while he asked: "Has the body been brought here?"

"No, his Betty went to G— this morning with the oldest son."

Reb Moshe did not say another word.

He sat there lost in thought.

He went to the little synagogue for the evening prayers, and when the service was finished the heads of families got together as usual in the ante-room, and the talk turned entirely on the sudden death of Hirsh Guttman. There was a lot of discussion about the funeral, whether it would take place in G— or in his own village. The general view was that it would cost too much to bring the body home, and besides, it would take a lot of time and trouble, so that the family would be best advised to have Hirsh buried at G— if the local burial society did not ask too much for the privilege.

As they were walking home, Ephraim Schlesinger said to Reb Moshe:

"Poor Hirsh did not dream the day before yesterday that he would need his share of the after-life so soon."

Reb Moshe did not answer. He suddenly walked away from the innkeeper, and continued his way home alone. He hardly touched his supper, and went to bed early. During the night ■ started several times out of his sleep with a loud cry, and sat up suddenly, waking Blume.

"What ■ the matter, Moshe?" she asked anxiously each time, seeing him sit up with staring eyes, gazing in the dark towards the door.

He muttered some Hebrew phrase, pulled his woollen night cap over his eyes, and dropped his head back on the pillow, till the same thing was repeated about an hour later.

At daybreak he arose, grunted something unintelligible in answer to his wife's urgent inquiries, and proceeded to astonish her by the strange things he did. He unfastened every mezuzah from the door-posts, drew out the strip of parchment from the brass case with the little glass-covered aperture, and spent a long time carefully examining the writing. Apparently he discovered nothing irregular, for he replaced them in their cases, and nailed the amulets back on the door-posts.

When he went to synagogue for the morning prayers he learnt that Hirsh Guttmann would be buried in G——. He immediately resolved to go to the funeral. It seemed natural, since he was a relative, but the family and the Jews of G—— who followed in the funeral procession were struck by his grief, which they considered overdone, and while he stood praying at the graveside with exceptional devotion and self-forgetfulness they discussed among themselves whether he was a hypocrite, and what did he expect to gain by appearing so inconsolable.

No sooner were they all back in the village than Reb Moshe went to the widow, who was in accordance with tradition sitting on the floor in her stockinged feet, and told her that he had come not only to fulfil the commandment to visit those in mourning, but also to return to her something that belonged to her dead husband, who as a jest had given it to him to keep over the Sabbath. He placed the silver watch and the five marks in her hand. He had come with the intention to return to her the deed of assignment as well, but he changed his mind at the last minute. He was afraid of setting the community talking about his frivolous deal.

That night he stayed up late poring over a volume of the

Talmud, and it was near midnight before he went to bed. He had not slept half an hour, when he started up again with a terrible cry. Blume shrieked, clutched his arm, and shouted: "Moshe! Moshe! What ails you?"

Reb Moshe released his arm, and pointed it towards the darkness, crying out with his whole body shaking like an aspen: "There! There! Don't you see him!"

"Whom, Moshe? Whom?"

He was in such a state of terror that she, too, was terrified. She hardly dared to look towards the door, in which direction his trembling hand was pointing.

"Who is there? What is happening?" she repeated, but Reb Moshe did not answer. He kindled a light, jumped out of bed, pulled on his trousers, and fur coat, and deaf to all his wife's entreaties sat down at the table, opened his Talmud again, and read there for hours, longer than Blume could wait, for after an hour of uneasy watching she fell asleep again.

Reb Moshe felt so distracted and miserable next day that he put off his business journey, and stopped at home. In answer to all the importunities of his wife, who demanded an explanation he maintained a stubborn silence. He remained for hours immovable over his Talmud folios. He did not even go to synagogue, but repeated the three prayers of the day at home. Silent and grim all day he became restless as the night approached, and as it grew later he became more disturbed.

"Go to bed," his Blume kept pleading with him.

"Leave me alone," he harshly returned. "I know myself when I have to go to bed."

When the hands of the clock on the wall pointed to ten minutes before midnight, Reb Moshe opened a cupboard, took out the Havdalah candle, lighted it and fixed it to the table at the side of the lamp, which he turned full on. These preparations filled his wife with fear and foreboding. She held her breath, and stared at her husband, watching his every movement. Reb Moshe took no notice of her, but seemed no less agitated, as he read the text of the Gemarah in front of him in a semi-audible sing-song, with a voice that betrayed uneasiness. Suddenly, the clock struck midnight. Reb Moshe threw his head back, creating a current of air in which the Havdalah candle suddenly flickered.

"Have you come again!" he gasped.

Blume shrieked, rushed with her hair flying through the door into the adjoining room where the children were sleeping, and crashed to the floor. She still heard Reb Moshe, however, speak in a strangled voice :

"What do you want from me ? What have I done to you ! Go to your rest ! Go to your rest !"

The children woke up and began to cry. The whole house was in an uproar. The Christian servant girl came running in, and her presence recalled Reb Moshe to his senses. He packed everybody back to bed, pleaded with Blume to calm herself, and to set the example he, too, lay down. But he left the lamp and the candle both burning, so that neither Blume nor he could close their eyes. All his wife's complaints that he should tell her what was going on did not avail to get a word out of him.

When it was day, Blume said to him very firmly :

"Moshe, this will have to stop. I haven't slept for three nights. I can't stand up. Nor can you. Tell me what is the matter with you."

"There isn't anything the matter with me."

"You're seeing ghosts or devils."

Reb Moshe started.

"Have you seen him, too ?"

"No. You drove me crazy. But there was nothing to be seen. You're imagining things. You're ill. You must see the doctor."

Reb Moshe shook his head.

"This ■ not a case for a doctor."

"So you think. Please, Moshe, do as I ask you. Take a journey to the doctor. Or else I will send to Lissa to bring him here."

"You mustn't !" Reb Moshe shouted.

But his wife wouldn't leave him alone on the subject, so he finally said that if she would only stop worrying him now, he would make up his mind in the afternoon what should be done about it.

He went to the synagogue, and though it was cold and snowing he went for a long solitary walk along the country road after the morning service was over. The result of his tramp was that he decided not to go to the doctor, but to see the Rabbi instead, and confide in him and ask for his advice and help.

He turned back and strode rapidly towards the house of the Rabbi, whom he found at home. He told him all about the share of the after-life that he had won from Hirsh Guttmann, produced the deed of assignment, and added in a frightened, almost inaudible voice :

"Since Hirsh died, he has come to me every night, wringing his hands, and sobbing. He wants his share of the after-life back."

"In dream?" asked Rabbi Herz Hirschberger, shaking his head.

"No, Rabbi, I am awake. I see him. I hear him. I smell the grave."

Rabbi Hirschberger was a comparatively enlightened man, and he did not really believe in ghosts.

"I did not think that you were affected by such things, Reb Moshe," he said. "Drive the whole affair out of your mind. It was sinful to play with sacred things. But your fear has been sufficient punishment. To-morrow is Friday. Fast all day. Ask to be called up to the Reading of the Law on the Sabbath, and give a handsome donation to the poor. That will be enough penitence."

Reb Moshe sat with his head bowed, listening carefully, but he did not seem to be altogether reassured. What should he do with the deed, he asked.

"Burn it," said the Rabbi. "That is all nonsense. One may forfeit one's share of the after-life by sinning, by apostasy, but one cannot sell it or stake and lose it as a wager in a game."

Reb Moshe thanked the Rabbi, and left him. He tried to follow his advice. He made superhuman efforts that night not to disturb his wife. But Blume saw that he did not sleep, that at the first stroke of midnight he hid his head beneath the bed clothes, and lay there trembling and shaking, and when he showed his face after some time it was bathed in perspiration. It was she who lighted the candle this time, in order to dispel his fear. The following two nights she left a night-light burning on the table. But that did not help, either.

Reb Moshe had fasted all day Friday. On Saturday, when he was called up to the Law he had amid the amazed whispering of the congregation donated ten marks to the poor; yet both Friday and Saturday, when midnight came, he experienced the same terror as before.

On Sunday he told his wife that he was starting out again on

one of his usual business trips. She heard the news with a profound sigh of relief. She hoped it was the beginning of his recovery.

Reb Moshe harnessed his horse and cart and drove off. But not to buy cows and calves from the peasants in the villages. He drove to G——. He left his horse and cart in the inn, and set out resolutely to walk to the Jewish cemetery. The gate in the low wall of the cemetery was locked. At the side of the main entrance there was a wicket-gate leading to the house of the grave-digger, who was also the cemetery-keeper. In response to Reb Moshe's timid ring that had to be repeated, the door was opened and the grave-digger appeared.

"What do you want?"

"I want to talk to you."

"Who are you?"

"My name is Moshe Rosenthal. You surely remember me. I was here at the funeral of Hirsh Guttmann."

"I am sorry. I was busy with the burial, and I could not pay much attention to the people. Please come inside. Have you come about the tombstone?"

"No. I have something private to say to you."

The grave-digger nodded to his wife and she left the room, the only one in the house, and went into the kitchen with the children who had been playing on the floor. When the two men were alone Reb Moshe moved up close to the grave-digger and said softly:

"I have a great favour to ask you. You will not lose anything by it. I want you to open Hirsh Guttmann's grave and coffin; there is something very important that I have to put right with my cousin."

The grave-digger started back and stared with frightened eyes at his visitor.

"You think I am mad," Reb Moshe said quickly. "You are wrong. I am quite sane. This is something special. I would rather not explain why, but I must talk to Hirsh. His peace of soul and my life depend on it."

Since there was nothing menacing in Reb Moshe's manner, the grave-digger composed himself a little and replied:

"You are asking the impossible. If you want to exhume the dead man you must obtain a permit from the authorities."

"I can't go to the authorities. ■ is a Jewish matter and they wouldn't understand me."

"I am sorry. But in that case I am unable to do anything."

"I am not asking you to do it for nothing. Tell me your price."

"It will cost me my job. Can you keep me and my wife and children for the rest of my life? Besides, it may mean prison for me."

"I must see my cousin, I tell you. I must see him, no matter what it costs."

The grave-digger stood up and said curtly, "I won't hear of it. Please go."

Reb Moshe, in a paroxysm of terror suddenly caught hold of the man's arm with both hands and cried :

"My cousin sold me his share in the hereafter. He comes to me every night and demands it back. His soul is being driven into hell. He will revenge himself on me and mine. I must return ■ him his share in the hereafter ! I must ! I must !"

He pulled out the sinister paper from his pocket-book, held it up in front of the grave-digger's face, and with tears streaming from his eyes, he cried : "He will have no peace till I have given him this paper back again."

The grave-digger was, for professional reasons, inclined to disparage the dead. He did not believe in the power of these poor, helpless forms that he put to bed in the earth. But the document with the Hebrew characters that he saw and could grasp, made him think, and Reb Moshe's utter despair stirred his sympathy. He scratched his ear, and ruminated. Reb Moshe saw that he was going to yield, and pressed home his advantage.

"I don't mind giving you a hundred marks," he whispered.

"That isn't enough," replied the grave-digger. "I want ■ least two hundred."

"Hundred and fifty. I am not a millionaire."

"Not a pfennig under two hundred."

Reb Moshe sighed and murmured :

"Very well, if it must be so."

"In advance," said the grave-digger.

"You shall have your money. Can you start at once ?"

"What are you thinking of ! By daylight ! No. We must wait for the night. And even then I can't do it myself,"

"Who is going to do it?"

"You yourself."

"I!"

"I can't give you any assistance. I am not supposed to know anything about the whole affair. When it is dark you make your way to the wall. You will find a ladder there, and I shall help you to get over. Then I shall conduct you to the grave. There will be a spade and a pick-axe there. And a lantern. After that I must leave you. The ground is still loose. There was no frost this week. You will not find it very difficult to dig up the grave. And you can easily open the coffin."

"I'll add another fifty marks. Dig up the soil, at least."

"Not for any amount. You must do it all yourself. When you have finished come and tap at this window. And I shall assist you to get away. And I shall also remove the ladder and the tools."

"It is hard, very, very hard. Yet it is better than such nights. When shall I come?"

"About seven o'clock. Nobody comes past here any more at that time."

Reb Moshe turned to go.

"What about the money?" said the grave-digger.

"To-night," replied Reb Moshe, and went off.

He spent the intervening hours reading psalms and saying the evening prayers. He did not go to the synagogue in order to avoid being questioned. Then he set out on his journey to the cemetery, which lay outside the town. The night was dark, and clouded. The moon rose late. The street and the whole vicinity were deserted, and lighted only by the faint shimmer of the snow. Reb Moshe's heart was convulsed with fear and agitation. His legs shook under him, as he trudged alongside the cemetery wall, till he reached the gate, and after searching for a while he came upon the ladder leaning against the wall, and after some hesitation he climbed up.

"So!" said a muffled voice from the other side. "Sit down on the wall and pull the ladder up after you."

Reb Moshe did as he was told. He handed the ladder down to the grave-digger, who placed it against the wall, and continued: "Now climb down. It isn't high."

Reb Moshe slid down and followed the grave-digger, who

without a word led the way. He carried a lantern, which had three of its panes covered over with packing-paper, and only the fourth pane emitted a dim light.

They walked past moss-grown gravestones and new, past sloping gravestones and upright, and past poor wooden slabs, till they came to the fresh grave, from which the snow had been removed, and a spade and pick-axe put there. The grave-digger placed the lantern on the ground, with the side from which the light issued towards the grave.

"Now get on with what you have to do, Herr Rosenthal," he said. "It shouldn't take you an hour to shovel up the earth. And less to fill it in again. And don't you be afraid. The dead don't harm anyone."

Reb Moshe took two hundred marks from his pocket-book, in which Hirsh Guttman's paper also lay. The grave-digger examined the notes by the light of the lantern, pocketed them, and said :

"I must leave you now. When you have finished, come to the window. I shall keep the shutters open, and a light burning inside."

He went back to his house, ate peacefully his frugal evening meal, and had a long talk with his wife about things that were urgently needed in the house and for the children, that their poverty had prevented them having before. He revelled in anticipation of all the good and necessary things that he would be able to acquire with his sudden wealth. Nine o'clock came. He sent his family to bed, telling them that he had something to do that would keep him up for a while. For he was a repairing tailor in his spare time, and he had a very fine but damaged coat to mend.

Half-past nine. Ten o'clock. And no sign of Reb Moshe. Three hours. Even a novice couldn't take so long about it. Something must have happened to him. For another quarter of an hour he tried to curb his growing anxiety, but then he could not stay any longer in the house. He crept out on tip-toe, so that he should not wake the sleeping family, but as soon as he got away from the house he broke into a run.

When he got to the grave where he had left Reb Moshe, he found no sign of him. It was dark and nothing stirred. The lantern was gone. There was a wall of loose soil about the open

grave. Had the man gone without filling in the grave again? He stepped cautiously up to the edge of the pit thinking to lay his hands on the spade. An overpowering smell of putrefaction rushed up from the grave, that got into his throat and almost knocked him over. It made him feel ill. He pulled himself together, got his pipe out of his pocket, filled it quickly and lighted it, and after he had pulled at it once or twice, he went back to the edge, and lighting a second match peered down. He saw Reb Moshe lying motionless at the bottom, half covered with clods of earth.

The grave-digger shrieked. Was the man dead? He threw caution to the winds. He hurried to his house, fetched a candle and shielding the flame as much as he could with his hand, he searched for the lantern. It lay extinguished in the grave beside the motionless man, too far down to be reached with the hand. He called to Reb Moshe, softly at first, then louder. There was no answer. His only course was to get down into the grave, which swallowed him up to the shoulders. He caught hold of Reb Moshe's arm and shook him. To his intense relief he heard a sigh. He shook him more violently, and with his disengaged hand tried to lift his head.

"Herr Rosenthal," he cried. "Herr Rosenthal. Stand up. What has happened to you?"

A muffled voice that seemed to come from a great distance made his flesh creep:

"Let me go, Hirsh! I have given it back to you now."

"Out of this! Out of this!" cried the grave-digger. "Else we shall both perish here."

He lighted the lantern with trembling hands, put it down at his feet, threw the extinguished candle out of the grave, and turned Reb Moshe round on his back. His face was white and drawn like that of a corpse. His eyes were open and staring with a look of horror at the grave-digger, who now lost no more time in seeking explanations. He sat Reb Moshe up, stood him on his feet, and then lifted him with a great effort out of the grave. Reb Moshe was no weight, but the grave-digger was not a strong man, and he did not receive the least assistance from the other. Reb Moshe was an inert mass that had to be shifted and shoved like a bundle of rags. When he was at last on top, and the grave-digger released his grip, he fell back like a sack. The

grave-digger turned to the grave. He levelled the edge a bit, and then started shovelling down the earth, working with frenzied speed to close it up again. As his glance followed the first spadeful of earth he saw that one of the thin pinewood boards of the coffin was broken, but he did not stop to think about that; he shovelled down clod on clod till the grave was at last filled in. He had no time to stop to level the ground, to raise a little mound on the grave, and to heap on it a layer of snow, to prevent its bareness attracting attention. He would have to leave that till just before daybreak. Now he had to do something about his unwelcome guest, and to see how he could get rid of him.

Reb Moshe, snatched from the pestilential smell of putrefaction in the grave, began to recover in the night air, and seated himself on an adjoining grave, where he waited, silent and rigid, till the grave-digger could give him his attention.

"Can you walk?" the grave-digger asked curtly.

He obtained no answer. He flashed his lantern in Reb Moshe's face. His matted hair was plastered down with the perspiration against his temples. There were clumps of earth from the grave in his beard. His clothes were soiled. His eyes stared vacantly. In such a state it was impossible for Reb Moshe to return to the inn without rousing suspicion, which might put people on the trail and reveal what had been done.

The grave-digger's joy at obtaining his two hundred marks turned to gall, and he cursed himself for having yielded to Reb Moshe's entreaties. He got hold of Reb Moshe by the arm, stood him up, and led him to his home. Reb Moshe tottered along like a child just beginning to walk.

The grave-digger roused his wife out of her sleep, commanded her gruffly to get up, to ask no questions, to keep her mouth shut, and to do what she was told. They undressed Reb Moshe and put him into their own bed. The wife went out and in front of the door brushed and cleaned his soiled clothes that smelled atrociously, and while she was doing that, the grave-digger, though it was almost midnight, hurried to the inn, where they were getting worried about Reb Moshe's absence, and told them that Herr Rosenthal had been taken ill in his house, but there was no cause for alarm, and meanwhile would they see that the horse was fed.

That was a strenuous and anxious night for the grave-digger's family. Reb Moshe slept, but every now and again he started up with a sound as if he were choking, so that the children woke out of their sleep, and howled with fright, and the mother did not know where to turn first.

By the morning the grave-digger had finished his work on the grave, and sat down exhausted on the bed, where Reb Moshe was lying awake now, but still groaning. When he asked him whether he felt well enough to get up his answer was a lot of confused words :

"He wanted to keep me there with him." "He stretched his hand out towards me ; he snatched his paper, and sighed when he had hold of it. Then he pulled me down, and as I fell, he whispered in my ear what he had suffered. The rest I have forgotten. The Angel of Death touched my head with his finger, and took away my memory."

Reb Moshe stayed in bed till his wife came in response to a mysterious letter from the grave-digger, and took him home after she had learnt all that had happened. He passed through a serious illness, in which his face underwent several terrible changes, and he remained for months in a state of semi-consciousness. Gradually, however, his consciousness returned, and by the autumn he was again able to go about his business.

His experience left him with a bad memory, taciturn, excessively pious, subject to nightmares, and with an extraordinary habit of whispering into the ears of people whom he knew at the end of every conversation :

"Take great care of your share of the hereafter."

## THUMBLING AND SAPLING

By THEODOR HERZL

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

Theodor Herzl, born in Budapest, May 2nd, 1860, died Vienna, July 3rd, 1904. Founder of the Zionist Organisation and the modern Zionist Movement. Was first a lawyer, but soon devoted himself exclusively to journalism and literature. Was Paris correspondent of the "Neue Freie Presse" and afterwards, till his death, its literary editor. Wrote many comedies and dramas produced on the Viennese stage and elsewhere.

His work for Zionism and the Jewish cause has made Herzl immortal. But he also won fame as a man of letters. Stefan Zweig has written of Herzl that "his readers were fascinated by his essays, now faintly tinged with melancholy, now brilliantly sparkling, full of profound pathos and yet as lucid as crystal. None was better able to give unconsciously what the Viennese wanted. I had read all his essays ever since I had been able to read at all; they served to educate me and filled me with admiration for his culture. Even to-day I remember almost every one of his feuilletons. To me his authority was the highest; his judgment fundamental and absolute.

"When I wrote my first short story at the age of nineteen," Zweig adds, "it never occurred to me to submit it to anyone but him, the beloved author whose word was final. Herzl accepted the story and not only published it, but mentioned my name as one of the young men in Vienna of whom all sorts of things might be expected. Herzl was the first to have confidence in me, and I am still as grateful to him as I was then."

Zionism has swept forward since the day when Herzl could record in his diary: "The Jews who are comfortable are, all of them, my enemies. Thus I have the right to be the greatest anti-semite of all." Zionism has become a popular movement. Once it was unpopular for a Jew to be a Zionist. To-day it is unpopular not to be a Zionist. Yet perhaps if Herzl were alive to-day, when the hosts of those who previously derided him, have followed him to the little solitary house that he built out in the empty, open space of his dream, he might, like Sapling in his story, fling out his arm to where the empty open spaces roll still untouched on the further side, and see there his dream.

THUMBLING and Sapling went walking one fine day on the outskirts of the town, where there are now villas, like little

palaces amid gardens. At that time it was all fields, clad only in the varying robe of the seasons.

Thumbling and Sapling—their real names were different, but for our tale it will suffice to call them by the nicknames bestowed on them as boys. After a time it becomes immaterial how they or even how we were once named.

Boys at school often foresee the man when they describe one of their fellows by his quality. At bottom it does not need much to deduce the ox from the calf.

But the nicknames Thumbling and Sapling had no deeper meaning. Thumbling was a little chap, a proper Tom Thumb, and Sapling was tall and slender, a sapling that would grow into a tree.

There was still a story going round of the two when they were boys deciding to cross the yet unexplored Dark Continent of Africa. Both of them together had ten gulden. They divided this fortune into two equal parts. With one half they would buy glass beads of all colours, for everybody knew, of course, that savages would give all they had for those. The other half would buy sausages to serve as food for the journey. The sausage was Thumbling's idea; the glass beads and the entire exploration scheme came from Sapling.

They only got as far as the end of the last sausage. Then they had to go back home for the paternal whipping. Thumbling swore that he would never again have anything to do with opening up fresh territory. Sapling determined that next time he would take only beads, because his expedition had depended too much on the sausage. One must learn from experience.

For the rest, Sapling's school-days were more pleasant than Thumbling's. For Sapling was always looking forward happily to the holidays, for ten whole months; while during the holidays, he was in constant ill-humour, because he did not like the idea of having to go back to school. While Thumbling was unhappy all the time he was in school, and whooped when the holidays came.

Later on they had many strange adventures. At least the little fellow thought that what was happening to him occurred for the first time in the history of the world. And the lanky fellow thought the same about his experiences.

Thumbling as a young man got to know a girl who had gone wrong, but as she had a small dowry, he hastened to make her his

wife. His decision had matured in his mind after a consultation with his friend, who had strongly advised him against such a marriage. Thumbling had such a poor opinion of him that he held it absolutely essential to do what the impractical fellow advised against. But ■ was Thumbling's nature to repent his actions, and after he was married, he often used to sigh : " Sapling was right ! Yes, Sapling was right ! "

Sapling acted as he had advised. He did not marry in haste a pretty butterfly or a sack of money. He considered, he thought things over when the opportunity or the temptation came.

One spring day the two of them went for a walk. Sapling started philosophising as was his wont. And he said to his unhappily married friend :

" One takes a wife not only for the period of the honeymoon, but for all the succeeding days and nights of one's life. One who wishes to choose wisely will not look at the girl, but at her mother."

It so happened that Thumbling had not been annoyed at home that day, and was in a good mood. So he said :

" Then marry your mother-in-law, if she is a widow."

To which Sapling replied :

" My dear fellow, every man marries his mother-in-law. Only he doesn't notice it immediately. That cannot happen to me. I have accustomed myself to see people not as they are, but as they will be in the future."

" Great Scott ! " cried Thumbling. But it is not certain whether the ejaculation was prompted by admiration for his friend's wisdom, or by the sight of a young woman who swished by, with him staring hard after her.

" Yes, indeed," Sapling went on. " I've got as far as that. I don't think there are many people who have found it possible. I can make the future present."

" And what of that ! " said Thumbling.

" Well, if you will permit me, it is quite an achievement. I see the man in the boy ; the greybeard in the man."

" And what do you get out of it ? " asked Thumbling.

Sapling could not answer that immediately.

" What do I get out of it ? " he repeated. " Permit me. Permit me. But it is always a good thing to be able to foresee things."

" Why is it a good thing ? " the other persisted.

This time Sapling found a crushing retort :

"So that one doesn't get into a mess, as happened to one of my friends, who has a habit of jumping at the first thing that comes along."

Thumbling dropped his eyes, and stamped angrily on.

Then he changed the subject.

"Doesn't it smell in these narrow streets?" he said.

"Of course it does," Sapling gladly assented. "It seems to me that it is because people open their windows in spring. All the bad air rushes out of the houses into the street. People generate so many poisons when they get together."

"That is another one of your ideas!" chuckled Thumbling.

But his lanky companion had stopped and was staring into the distance.

"Come," he said. "I'll show you something."

An omnibus rolled up. At a sign the driver pulled up his hacks, two of the six seats in the front of the vehicle were unoccupied. Thumbling found himself sitting next to a young woman, whose delightful plumpness he could feel at every jolt of the bus. The girl facing him had laughing eyes, and dimples, and her golden locks straggled from under her tiny hat. He was soon in conversation with both, and his heart fluttered from one to the other. It was a blissful journey.

"This is where we get out," his friend suddenly broke in.

Thumbling did not like to say that he would rather stay where he was. It wouldn't do for a married man! So he got out, sighing all the time, and he put his whole soul into his farewell glance, which the smile of the woman and the blush of the girl gratefully acknowledged.

"You found it a long journey," remarked Sapling.

"Not at all. Did you?"

"No. I never get bored. I study my fellow-passengers."

"What do you mean?" Thumbling stammered a little unsteadily.

But the great observer had as usual not noticed anything.

"When I find myself in the company of a number of people," he said, "I try to imagine what is going to happen to them. One thing is certain—that they will all die. In thirty, forty, fifty years at most, they will all be dead. Now think, we six who sat in that box just now, how far from each other shall we lie? And where?"

"Stop!" cried Thumbling. "I would rather have travelled on with those women than have you frighten me with your grisly tales."

"Coward! Death is my companion at all times. He damps my joys, but also moderates my griefs. You cannot avoid him, consequently accustom yourself to him. A little while back we were travelling with a pretty girl . . ."

"So you saw her, too, you rogue!"

"Of course, I saw her! I amused myself picturing her death-mask. If she died to-day, she would be beautiful. She has such clean lines. Think of her stiffened in her lovely youth. No sculptor could shape anything more noble than her pale form. But she will not end so wonderfully. She will wither or grow fat, and her death-mask will be hideous . . ."

"Stop!" shrieked Thumbling. "If you are amused by that sort of thing, I am not. Have you lured me out here to give me the horrors! You'll never get me to go with you again."

"No, no," Sapling assured him. "I did not bring you here for that. I had something else in my mind. Look round. What do you see?"

"Fields," said Thumbling.

"Nothing else?"

"Nothing else . . . Stay—those are the last houses of the town. And I shouldn't like to walk about there alone in the dark."

"You're blind! . . . I am going to show you the future."

"But please, nothing grisly. I can't stand it."

"Don't be afraid. On the contrary, I am going to show you life at its fairest. In a few years time the finest people will be living here."

"Hah, Hah, Hah! In these fields? I can't see the tents going up yet."

"Who said a word about tents? There will be beautiful houses here, with lovely gardens. Didn't you complain that it smells in those narrow streets? People squat too close together. It isn't good for them. They fall ill, and die before their time."

"There you go again!"

"I'm sorry. Let's say that they don't live as well and as long as they might. A plant, an animal needs air and light. So do people. The city must expand. It will. Do you know what I call these fields on which many a splendid structure will rise? I

call them the future. Here will stand the homesteads of happy people, close to nature, elevated by art. The finest sites, and cheap."

"Cheap!" mumbled Thumbling dreamily.

"Yes, dirt cheap. In the town you must pull down one house before you can build another. So the land is dreadfully dear. These fields cost next to nothing. If we offer the cramped tenants in the town beautiful, spacious houses here for the same money or less, they won't mind the journey out."

"The journey out in the omnibus is fine," Thumbling remarked reminiscently. An idea flashed through his mind. But being a solid, practical man he first wanted to test it by converting his supposition into straight honest figures. It was the old distrust born of their African expedition that had gone only as far as the end of the sausage. His calculations showed an imposing profit.

That frightened Thumbling. Supposing somebody else hit on the same idea. They must go into the business at once.

They did. They soon found the farmer who owned the fields, they reached an agreement, and they arranged to have him meet them in town the next day to sign the contract.

Thumbling spent an uneasy night. He was afraid the farmer might change his mind. He came, however, and the matter was settled.

So far things had gone quickly. The future belonged to them.

In their enthusiasm Thumbling and Sapling had put everything they possessed into this splendid enterprise. Now they had to find the funds to carry out their scheme, and there the trouble started. Thumbling ran about trying to persuade people to come in with them. He got a fine reception. It was a scatterbrain idea. Nobody would go to live so far away from the centre. He tried rhapsodising in Sapling's way, painting the future in glowing colours. The practical people laughed at him. He fell in their estimation. And his futile efforts made him bitter against the fool who had misled him.

Sapling shrugged his shoulders. The fact that mediocrities couldn't understand did not prove anything. He quoted instances out of history. That quietened his friend for a while, but it soon wore off. Some time passed. They had not seen their property again. Then Thumbling suggested in a fit of depression that they should go out to inspect their future.

They travelled out again in a similar jolting box. This time there were no pleasant travelling companions, and it was raining. It was autumn. The scales fell from Thumbling's eyes. It was, indeed, too far out. It was impossible. The future resolved itself again into empty fields.

The two friends found themselves quarrelling heatedly after that. Thumbling plagued the other one so much that finally he agreed to give up the future.

That could only be done at a considerable loss. They found their farmer, and persuaded him to take back his fields for half the sum they had paid him.

Sapling retained a patch at the extreme end, on which he wanted to build a little house for himself. For he believed firmly in the future. He started building.

When the house was finished, he moved out there, and lived isolated. The fields clad only in the varying robe of the seasons lay between him and the town.

If Thumbling was asked about him, he answered :

"He's crazy."

They did not see each other for years. Meanwhile another fellow appeared on the edge of the town, laid out a garden and put up the first villa. For years it stood there all alone, looking ridiculous. Then came a second. Soon there was a group of them. And as there were several of them it no longer seemed mad. The majority always decides what is proper.

In the end it was those who left the narrow streets and went to live in the green spaciousness who were considered wise. And gradually something wonderful happened. The last row of houses seemed to be constantly on the move, and the gap between Sapling's small house and the town grew less. It was like the dry land receding. The flood rolled on.

And when it was near, so near that Sapling's poor house stood in what was beginning to be a street, he was visited by a white-haired little man. It was his calculating, practical, repenting friend. This time he was repenting something else. But he spoke jestingly of old times and past mistakes.

Then—

"By the way, where were our fields? I no longer remember. You do, of course. You stayed here, and waited for the town to creep up. Which was our property? Didn't it start where that

rococo palace stands, and stretch past that red villa ? Tell me, where ■ the future now ? ”

Sapling took him up to one of the windows, which looked out on the side that led away from the town. There were only fields in sight, right up to the horizon.

Sapling flung out his arm :

“ There ! ”

## THE DEATH OF A BACHELOR

*By* ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

*Translated by* ERIC SUTTON

Arthur Schnitzler, born 1862, in Vienna, and died there in 1931. Like his father, Professor Johann Schnitzler, who had a Professorship in Medicine at Vienna University, and his brother, Professor Julius Schnitzler, also of Vienna University (his sister married the famous laryngologist, Professor Hajek, also of Vienna University, and a Jew) he entered the medical profession, and he constantly brought his medical knowledge into his books. The Jewish problem also frequently came into his work, and in "Professor Bernhardt" and "The Road to the Open" it is the dominating theme.

Schnitzler is the most important and most representative writer of the so-called Viennese school. His work is tinged with subtle irony, and gentle resignation. The sex problem plays a great part in his work, and some of his plays, notably "The Ring" ("Der Reigen"), are banned as erotic.

Schnitzler is one of the masters of modern literature. "Those tender portrayals of women, that gentle and human irony, those subtle searchings into the human soul—all this has made of his stories something imperishable in art. We learn more about life and its disappointments from the sad pages of Schnitzler's prose than we ever knew before. There is so much humanity and pathos in Schnitzler that when we read him we feel we have been enriched by a new and poignant experience."

SOMEONE had knocked at the door, quite gently, but the doctor awoke at once, turned on the light, and sat up in bed. He glanced at his wife who was sleeping quietly, picked up his dressing-gown, and went into the hall. He did not at once recognise the old woman who stood there, with the grey shawl over her head.

"The master is suddenly taken very bad," she said; "would the doctor be kind enough to come at once?"

Now he recognised the voice: it was the house-keeper of that old friend of his who had never married. The doctor's first thought was, "My friend ■ fifty-five years old, his heart has

been out of order for years—it might well be something serious,” and he said, “I’ll come at once—will you wait for me?”

“Excuse me, doctor, but I have to hurry round to two other gentlemen,” and she mentioned the names of the merchant and the author.

“But what is your business with them?”

“My master wants to see them again.”

“See them again?”

“Yes, sir.”

“He is sending for his friends,” thought the doctor, “because he feels very near to death,” . . . and he asked, “Is anyone with your master?”

“Of course,” the old woman answered. “Johann is with him all the time.” And she departed.

The doctor went back into his bedroom, and while he was dressing quickly and as noiselessly as possible, a feeling of bitterness came over him. It was not so much grief at the possibility of losing a good old friend, but the painful consciousness that they were all so far on in years, though not so long ago they had been young.

The doctor drove in an open carriage through the soft, heavy air of that spring night, to the neighbouring suburb where his friend lived. He looked up at the bedroom window which stood wide open, and whence the light glimmered palely into the night.

The doctor went up the stairs, the servant opened the door, greeted him gravely, and dropped his left arm in a gesture of grief.

“What?” asked the doctor, catching his breath. “Am I too late?”

“Yes, sir,” answered the servant, “my master died a quarter of an hour ago.”

The doctor heaved a deep sigh and went into the room. There lay his dead friend, with thin, bluish, half-open lips, his arms outstretched over the white coverlet; his meagre beard was in disorder, and a few grey wisps of hair had strayed over his pale damp forehead. The silk-shaded electric lamp that stood on the night table cast a reddish shadow over the pillows. The doctor looked at the dead man. “When was he last in our house?” he thought to himself. “I remember it was snowing that evening. It must have been last winter.” They had not seen much of each other latterly.

From without came the sound of horses' hoofs pawing the road. The doctor turned away from the dead man and looked across at the slender branches of the trees swaying in the night air.

The servant came in and the doctor then inquired how it had all happened.

The servant told a familiar story of a sudden attack of vomiting and breathlessness : then his master had leapt out of bed, paced up and down the room, rushed to his writing-table, tottered back to bed again, where he lay racked with thirst and groaning : and after one last effort to raise himself he had sunk back upon the pillows. The doctor nodded and laid his hand on the dead man's forehead.

A carriage drew up. The doctor went over to the window. He saw the merchant get out and glance inquiringly up at the house. Unconsciously the doctor let his hand fall just as the servant had done who had opened the door to him. The merchant drew back his head as if refusing to believe it, and the doctor shrugged his shoulders, left the window, and sat down, in sudden weariness, on a chair at the feet of the dead man. The merchant came in wearing a yellow overcoat unbuttoned, put his hat on a small table near the door, and shook the doctor by the hand. "How dreadful !" he said ; "how did it happen ?" And he stared dubiously at the dead man.

The doctor told him what he knew, and added : "Even if I had been able to come ■ once, I could have done nothing."

"Fancy," said the merchant, "it is exactly a week to-day since I last spoke to him at the theatre. I wanted to have supper with him afterwards, but he had one of his secret appointments."

"What, still ?" said the doctor, with a gloomy smile.

Outside another carriage stopped. The merchant went to the window. When he saw the author getting out, he drew back, not wanting to announce the sad news by his expression. The doctor had taken a cigarette out of his case and was twisting it about in an embarrassed sort of way. "It's a habit I've had since my hospital days," he remarked apologetically. "When I left the sick-room at night, the first thing I always did was to light a cigarette, whether I had been to give an injection of morphia or to certify a death.

"Do you know," said the merchant, "how long it ■ since I saw a corpse ? Fourteen years—not since my father lay in his coffin."

"But—your wife?"

"I saw my wife in her last moments, but—not afterwards."

The author appeared, shook hands with the other two, and glanced doubtfully at the bed. Then he walked resolutely up to it and looked earnestly at the dead man, yet not without a contemptuous twitch of the lips. "So it was he," he said to himself. For he had played with the question which of his more intimate friends was to be the first to take the last journey.

The housekeeper came in. With tears in her eyes she sank down by the bed, sobbed, and wrung her hands. The author laid his hand gently and soothingly on her shoulder.

The merchant and the doctor stood at the window, and the dank air of the spring night played upon their foreheads.

"It is really very odd," began the merchant, "that he has sent for all of us. Did he want to see us all gathered round his death-bed? Had he something important to say to us?"

"As far as I'm concerned," said the doctor, with a sad smile, "it would not be odd, as I am a doctor. And you," he said, turning to the merchant, "you were at times his business adviser. So, perhaps, it was a matter of some last instructions that he wanted to give you personally."

"That is possible," said the merchant.

The housekeeper had left the room, and the friends could hear her talking to the other servant in the hall. The author was still standing by the bed carrying on a silent dialogue with the dead man.

"I think," whispered the merchant to the doctor, "that latterly he saw more of our friend. Perhaps he can throw some light on the question."

The author stood motionless, gazing steadily into the closed eyes of the dead man. His hands, which held his broad-brimmed grey hat, were crossed behind his back. The two others began to grow impatient, and the merchant went up to him and cleared his throat.

"Three days ago," observed the poet, "I went for a two-hours walk with him among the hills and vineyards. Would you like to know what he talked about? A trip to Sweden that he had planned for the summer, a new Rembrandt portfolio just published by Watson's in London, and last of all about Santos Dumont. He went into all sorts of mathematical and scientific details about a dirigible airship, which, to be frank with

you, I did not entirely grasp. He certainly was not thinking about death. It must, indeed, be true that at a certain age people again stop thinking about it."

The doctor had gone into the adjoining room. Here he might certainly venture to light his cigarette. The sight of white ashes in the bronze tray on the writing-table struck him as strange and almost uncanny. He wondered why he was still there at all, as he sat down on the chair by the writing-table. He had the right to go as soon as he liked, since he had obviously been sent for as a doctor. For their friendship had nearly come to an end. "At my time of life," he went on, pursuing his reflections, "it is quite impossible for a man like me to keep friends with someone who has no profession and never has had one. What would he have taken up if he had not been rich? He would probably have turned to literature: he was very clever." And he remembered many malicious but pointed remarks the dead man had made, more especially about the works of their common friend, the author.

The author and the merchant came in. The author assumed an expression of disapproval when he saw the doctor sitting at the deserted writing-table with a cigarette in his hand, which was, however, still unlit, and he closed the door behind him. Here, however, they were to some extent in another world.

"Have you any sort of idea? . . ." asked the merchant.

"About what?" asked the author absent-mindedly.

"What made him send for us, and just us?"

The author thought it unnecessary to look for any special reason. "Our friend," he explained, "felt death was upon him, and if he had lived a rather solitary life, at least latterly, at such an hour people who are by nature socially inclined probably feel the need of seeing their friends about them."

"He had a mistress, though," remarked the merchant.

"Oh, a mistress," repeated the author, and contemptuously raised his eyebrows.

At this moment the doctor noticed that the middle drawer of the writing-table was half open.

"I wonder if his will is here?" he said.

"That's no concern of ours," observed the merchant, "at least at this moment. And in any case, there is a married sister living in London."

The servant came in. He respectfully asked what arrangements he should make about having the body laid out, the funeral, and the mourning cards. He knew that a will was in the possession of his master's lawyer, but he was doubtful whether it contained instructions in these matters. The author found the room stuffy and close; he drew aside the heavy red curtains over one of the windows and threw open both casements, and a great waft of the dark blue spring night poured into the room. The doctor asked the servant whether he had any idea why the dead man had sent for him, because, if he remembered rightly, it was years since he had been summoned to that house in his capacity as doctor. The servant, who obviously expected the question, pulled a swollen-looking wallet from his jacket-pocket, took out a sheet of paper, and explained that seven years ago his master had written down the names of the friends whom he wanted sent for when he was dying. So that, even if the dead man had been unconscious at the time, he would have ventured to send for the gentlemen on his own responsibility.

The doctor took the sheet of paper from the servant's hand and found five names written on it: in addition to those present was the name of a friend who had died two years ago, and another that he did not know. The servant explained that the latter was a manufacturer whose house the dead man used to visit nine or ten years ago, and whose address had been lost and forgotten. The three looked at each other with uneasy curiosity. "What does that mean?" asked the merchant. "Did he intend to make a speech in his last hours?"

"A funeral oration on himself, no doubt," added the author.

The doctor had turned his eyes on the open drawer of the writing-table, and suddenly these words, in large Roman letters, stared at him from the cover of an envelope: "To my friends."

"Hullo!" he cried, took the envelope, held it up, and showed it to the others. "This is for us." He turned to the servant and, with a movement of the head, indicated that he was not wanted. The servant went.

"For us?" said the author, with wide-open eyes.

"There can be no doubt," said the doctor, "that we are justified in opening this."

"It's our duty," said the merchant, and buttoned up his overcoat.

The doctor had taken a paper knife from a glass tray, opened the envelope, laid the letter down, and put on his eyeglasses. The author took advantage of the brief interval to pick up the letter and unfold it. "As it is for all of us"—he remarked casually, and bent over the writing-table so that the light from the shaded lamp should fall on the paper. Near him stood the merchant. The doctor remained seated.

"You might read it aloud," said the merchant, and the author began.

"'To my friends,'"—he stopped with a smile—"yes, it's written here also," and went on reading in a tone of admirable detachment. "'About a quarter of an hour ago I breathed my last. You are assembled at my death-bed, and you are preparing to read this letter together—if it still exists in the hour of my death, I ought to add. For it might so happen that I should come to a better frame of mind——'"

"What?" asked the doctor.

"'A better frame of mind,'" repeated the author, and continued: "'and decide to destroy this letter, for it can do not the slightest good to me, and, at the very least, may cause you some unpleasant hours, even if it does not absolutely poison the life of one or other of you.'"

"Poison our lives?" repeated the doctor, in a wondering tone, as he polished his eyeglasses.

"Quicker," said the merchant in a husky voice.

The author continued. "'And I ask myself what kind of evil humour it ■ that sends me to the writing-table to-day and induces me to write down words whose effect I shall never be able to read upon your faces. And even if I could, the pleasure I should get would be too trifling to serve as an excuse for the incredible act I am now about to commit with feelings of the heartiest satisfaction.'"

"Ha!" cried the doctor in a voice he did not recognise as his own. The author threw a glance of irritation at him, and read on, quicker and with less expression than before. "'Yes, it ■ an evil humour, and nothing else, for I have really nothing whatever against any of you. I like you all very well in my own way, just as you like me in your way. I never despised you, and if I often laughed at you, I never mocked you. No, not once—and least of all in those hours of which you are so soon to call

to mind such vivid and such painful images. Why, then, this evil humour? Perhaps it arose from a deep and not essentially ignoble desire not to leave the world with so many lies upon my soul. I might imagine so, if I had even once had the slightest notion of what men call remorse.' "

" Oh, get on to the end of it," said the doctor in a new abrupt tone.

The merchant, without more ado, took the letter from the author, who felt a sort of paralysis creeping over his fingers, glanced down it quickly and read the words: "' It was fate, my dear friends, and I could not alter it. I have had the wives of all of you: yes, every one.' "

The merchant stopped suddenly and turned back to the first sheet.

" The letter was written nine years ago," said the merchant.

" Go on," said the author sharply.

And the merchant proceeded. "' Of course, the circumstances were different in each case. With one of them I lived almost as though we had been married, for many months. The second was more or less what the world is accustomed to call a mad adventure. With the third, the affair went so far that I wanted us to kill ourselves together. The fourth I threw downstairs because she betrayed me with another. And the last was my mistress on one occasion only. Do you all breathe again—my good friends? You should not. It was perhaps the loveliest hour of my life . . . and here. Well, my friends, I have nothing more to tell you. Now I am going to fold up this letter, put it away in my writing-desk—and there may it lie until my humour changes and I destroy it, or until it is given into your hands in that hour when I lie upon my death-bed. Farewell.' "

The doctor took the letter from the merchant's hand and read ■ with apparent care from the beginning to the end. Then he looked up at the merchant who stood by with folded arms and gazed down at him with something like derision.

" Although your wife died last year," said the doctor calmly, " it is none the less true."

The author paced up and down the room, jerked his head convulsively from side to side a few times, and suddenly hissed out through his clenched teeth, " The swine," and then stared in front of him as though looking for something that had dissolved

into air. He was trying to recall the image of the youthful creature that he had once held in his arms as wife. Other women's faces appeared, often recalled, but long since, he had thought, forgotten, but he could not bring before his mind the one he wanted. For his wife's body was withered and held no attraction for him, and it was so long since she had been his beloved. But she had become something other than that to him, something more and something nobler : a friend and a comrade ; full of pride at his successes, full of sympathy with his disappointments, full of insight into his deepest nature. It seemed to him not impossible that the dead man had, in his wickedness, secretly envied him his comrade and tried to take her away. For all those others—what had they really meant to him ? He called to mind certain adventures, some of old days and some more recent ; there had been enough and to spare of them in his varied literary life, and his wife had smiled or wept over them as they went their course. Where was all this now ? As faded as that far-off hour when his wife had flung herself into the arms of a man of no account, without reflection, perhaps without thought : almost as extinct as the recollection of that same hour in the dead skull that lay within on that pitifully crumpled pillow. But perhaps this last will and testament was a bundle of lies—the last revenge of a poor commonplace fellow who knew himself condemned to eternal oblivion, upon a distinguished man over whose works death has been given no power. This was not at all improbable. But even if it were true—it was a petty revenge and unsuccessful in either case.

The doctor stared at the sheet of paper that lay before him, and thought of his gentle, ever kindly wife, now growing old, who lay asleep at home. He thought also of his three children : of his eldest who was now doing his one year's military service, of his tall daughter, who was engaged to a lawyer, and of the youngest, who was so graceful and charming that a famous artist, who had lately met her at a ball, had asked if he might paint her. He thought of his comfortable home, and all this that surged up at him from the dead man's letter seemed to him not so much untrue as, in some mysterious way, almost sublimely insignificant. He scarcely felt that at this moment he had experienced anything new. A strange epoch in his existence came into his mind, fourteen or fifteen years before, when he

had met with certain troubles over his profession, and, worn out and nearly crazy, had planned to leave the city, his wife and family. At the same time he had entered upon a kind of wild, reckless existence, in which a strange hysterical woman had played a part, who had subsequently committed suicide over another lover. How his life had gradually returned to its original course he could not now remember in the least. But it must have been in those bad times, which had passed away as they had come, like an illness, that his wife had betrayed him. Yes, it must so have happened, and it was clear to him that he had really always known it. Was she not once on the point of confessing it? Had she not given him hints? Thirteen or fourteen years ago. . . .When could it have been. . . .? Wasn't it one summer on a holiday trip—late in the evening on the terrace of some hotel? In vain he tried to recall those vanished words.

The merchant stood at the window and stared into the soft, pale night. He was determined he would remember his dead wife. But however much he searched his inmost consciousness, at first he could only see himself in the light of ■ grey morning, standing in black clothes outside a curtained doorway, receiving and returning sympathetic handshakes, with a stale reek of carbolic and flowers in his nostrils. Slowly he succeeded in recalling to his mind the image of his dead wife. And yet at first it was but the image of an image: for he could only see the large portrait in a gilt frame that hung over the piano in the drawing-room at home and displayed a haughty-looking lady of thirty in a ball dress. Then at last she herself appeared as a young girl, who, nearly twenty years before, pale and trembling, had accepted his proposal of marriage. Then there arose before him the appearance of a woman in all her splendour, enthroned beside him in a theatre-box, gazing at the stage, but inwardly far away. Then he remembered a passionate creature who welcomed him with unexpected warmth on his return from a long journey. Swiftly again his thoughts turned to a nervous tearful being with greenish heavy eyes, who had poisoned his days with all manner of evil humours. Next, he saw an alarmed, affectionate mother, in a light morning frock, watching by the bedside of a sick child who, none the less, died. Last of all, he saw a pale, outstretched creature in a room reeking of ether, her mouth so pitifully drawn down at the corners, and cold

beads of sweat on her forehead, who had shaken his very soul with pity. He knew that all these pictures, and a hundred others, that flashed past his mind's eye with incredible speed, were of one and the same being who had been lowered into the grave two years ago, over whom he had wept, and after whose death he had felt freed from bondage. It seemed to him he must choose one out of all these pictures to reach some definite reaction ; for, at present, he was tossed by shame and anger, groping in the void. He stood there irresolute, and gazed across at the houses in their gardens, shimmering faintly red and yellow in the moonlight and looking like pale painted walls with only air behind them.

" Good-night," said the doctor and got up. The merchant turned towards him and said : " There's nothing more for me to do here either."

The author had picked up the letter, stuffed it unobtrusively into his coat pocket, and opened the door into the adjoining room. Slowly, he walked up to the death-bed, and the others watched him looking down silently at the corpse, his hands behind his back. Then they turned away.

In the hall the merchant said to the servant : " As regards the funeral, it is possible that the will in possession of the lawyers may contain some further instructions."

" And don't forget," pursued the doctor, " to telegraph to your master's sister in London."

" To be sure, sir," replied the servant, as he opened the front door.

The author overtook them on the doorstep. " I can take you both with me," said the doctor, whose carriage was waiting.

" Thank you, no," said the merchant, " I shall walk."

He shook hands with both of them and walked down the road towards the city, glad to feel the soft night air upon his face.

The author got into the carriage with the doctor. The birds were beginning to sing in the garden. The carriage drove past the merchant, and the three men raised their hats, ironically polite, each with an identical expression on his face. " Shall we soon see another play of yours ? " the doctor asked the author in his usual voice.

The latter launched into an account of the extraordinary difficulties involved in the production of his latest drama which,

he had to confess, contained the most sweeping attacks on everything generally held to be sacred. The doctor nodded and did not listen. Nor did the author, for the familiar sentences fell from his lips as though he had learned them by heart.

Both men got out at the doctor's house, and the carriage drove away.

The doctor rang. They both stood and said nothing. As the footsteps of the porter approached, the author said, "Good-night, my dear doctor"; and he added slowly, with a twitch of his nostrils, "I shan't mention this to my wife, you know."

The doctor threw a sidelong glance at him and smiled his charming smile.

The door opened, they shook each other by the hand, the doctor disappeared into the passage, and the door slammed. The author went.

He felt in his breast pocket. Yes, the letter was there. His wife would find it sealed and secure among his papers. And with that strange power of imagination that was peculiarly his own, he could already hear her whispering over his grave, "Oh, how splendid of you. . . . how noble!"

## THE GOLD OF CAXAMALCA

By JACOB WASSERMANN

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

Jacob Wassermann, born 1873 at Fuerth, in Bavaria. Regarded as the biggest of the modern German writers ("Wassermann seems to me to be the biggest of the modern German novelists," Arnold Bennett wrote). His first book, "The Jews of Zirndorf," was published in 1897. "The Maurizius Case," "World's End," "Faber, or the Lost Years," "Wedlock," and "The World's Illusion," rank among the great books of our generation.

He has given a great deal of consideration to the Jewish problem, and has written about it extensively. It is also the central theme of his autobiography, "My Road as German and Jew," which concludes with the words, "I am a German and a Jew; one as much, as completely as the other. Neither is to be separated from the other."

"I am a Jew," he declared in an appeal addressed to the President of the Austrian Republic a few years ago on behalf of a young Jewish student falsely convicted by antisemitic prejudice at Innsbruck. "I have never hidden my face behind a visor. I stand here free to the open wind, on the bridge between both camps, Jews and non-Jews. I have rendered services to both, but above all to the principle of justice."

"Wassermann is a story-teller," writes Thomas Mann. "He is this above all else, a born fabulist. He might have spent his life telling stories, with the people standing about him wide-eyed and open-mouthed. He has at his command all the arts of the narrator as well as all his artifices—a term I do not hesitate to use, for these little tricks also are essential. He is the man who to-day can still write a real novel of the finer sort. I believe in the future of the novel. I believe that it is now at a critical point, that it may develop on a high plane, that most amazing things will be done with it. But I no longer have much faith in the old novel. Yet Wassermann's supreme gifts still make it possible—more than possible: triumphant. From a certain point of view he is a conservative—conservative in his art."

The great Gerhart Hauptman, writing of Wassermann, says:

"Wassermann's ability to paint tremendous canvases in his novels has made him a novelist of the first importance. His novels are almost epical. They span an entire life, an entire nation, or an entire generation. There is nothing in modern fiction to compare with 'The

World's Illusion,' with its vast and colossal scope, with its broad philosophy and human understanding, with its touches of malice and satire. 'The World's Illusion' is a human chronicle; it is life in epitome. And in everything Wassermann has done he reveals the same magnificent sweep that impressed us so profoundly in that early masterpiece. He is, let me say openly, a novelist who has brought new depth and power to fiction. His influence will be incalculable.'

THE following was written down by Domingo de Soria Luce, at one time a knight and then a monk, in a monastery in the city of Lima, to which he had retired from the world, thirteen years after the conquest of Peru.

## II

In November, 1532, we marched, three hundred knights and some infantry, under the leadership of General Francesco Pizarro, peace to his memory, across the vast mountains of the Cordilleras. I shall not speak of the difficulties and dangers of this march. It will suffice to say that at times we thought that our last hour had come, and the pangs of hunger and thirst were slight compared with the terrors of wild nature, the gaping abysses, the steep roads that in many places were so narrow that we had to get off our horses and lead them by the bridle. Nor shall I speak of the horrifying desolation, the cold and the snowstorms that made some of us curse the unhappy resolve that had led us into this murderous land.

But on the seventh day our sufferings were at an end, and when the evening came, we entered Caxamalca, exhausted, and yet with our spirits stirred. The weather that had been fine since the morning, now gave cause to fear a storm, and soon there was rain mingled with hail, and it was cold. Caxamalca means as much as City of Frost.

We were amazed to find the town completely deserted. No one came out of the houses to welcome us in the manner of the coastal districts. We rode through the streets without encountering a living soul, without hearing a sound except that of our horses' hoofbeats and their echo.

But before the dark had quite settled, we perceived along the slope of the mountains, as far as the eye could reach, an immense

number of white tents, scattered about like snowflakes. That was the army of the Inca, Atahualpa, and the sight filled even the bravest among us with dismay.

### III

The General deemed it necessary to send an embassy to the Inca. He selected the young knight, Hernando de Soto, to whom I was bound with sincere friendship, and fifteen horsemen. At the last moment de Soto obtained permission from the General that I should accompany him, and that made me very happy.

We started out at dawn. The mountains rose high up into the sky on the right, the flowering plain lay in front of us and to the left. Everything was so novel that I just stared and gaped.

After an hour we came to a wide river, with a beautiful wooden bridge built over it. There we were received and conducted to the camp of the Inca. We soon found ourselves in a spacious courtyard, with a hall of pillars running round it. The pillars were richly and artistically ornamented with gold. The walls were covered with yellow and cobalt-blue stucco. In the middle there was a round stone basin that was fed through copper pipes with warm and cold water. Splendidly-clad noblemen and women surrounded the Prince, who wore a scarlet robe, and on his brow the insignia of his rule, the red Borla, whose fringes hung down to his eyes.

His face was handsome, with an expression of crystal. He might have been about thirty. His frame was powerful, and well-proportioned, his demeanour commanding, yet of a refinement that astonished us. De Soto had brought with us the interpreter Felipillo, a native who had recently been baptised, a man of extreme cunning, who, as things turned out, did a great deal of harm, as I shall report in due course. He was filled with hatred of his fellow-countrymen, the origin of which we could never really discover, and he was the only rebel and apostate whom we found in Peru.

Through him de Soto spoke to the Inca. He delivered the greetings of the General, and respectfully invited Atahualpa to reign to visit our leader.

Atahualpa did not reply. No gesture, no glance to show that he had understood. His lids drooped, and he seemed to be

strenuously pondering the meaning of the words he had heard. After a time one of the nobles standing at his side, said : " It is well, stranger."

De Soto was perplexed. It was as impossible to guess the thought of the prince and what he felt, as if there were mountains standing between us. What a strange world ! What a strange appearance and spirit ! So de Soto asked the Inca very courteously, almost humbly, that he should himself communicate what he had decided. A smile glided across Atahualpa's face. I noticed this smile frequently afterwards, and it always made me wonder. He answered through the mouth of Felipillo : " Tell your leader that I am observing fast days which conclude to-day. I shall visit him to-morrow. Till I come he may occupy the buildings in the Square, but no others. What is to happen afterwards I shall command."

Again there was silence. We had not dismounted from our horses, because we felt safer in the saddle, and it inspired more fear in the Peruvians, as we knew from experience. De Soto observed that the Inca was watching very attentively the fiery steed on which he sat before him, and which was champing its bridle and pawing the ground. De Soto was always a little vain about his horsemanship and it tempted him to display it. He also thought that it would intimidate the Prince. So he gave the beast his reins, dug his spurs into him and sped him over the paved square. Then he turned, and stopped it in full gallop, so that it was almost thrown on to its hind legs, so close to the Inca that a little of the foam that flecked its nostrils spurted on to the royal robe.

The guards and courtiers were so alarmed at this novel exhibition that almost involuntarily they flung out their arms, and at the stormy approach of the horse anxiously drew back. Atahualpa himself remained as calm, as cool as before. A legend grew up afterwards that the same day he had those of his nobles who had shown such shameful cowardice executed. But that, like so much else that I have heard, is nothing more than idle, malicious invention designed to blacken the name of the Prince.

#### IV

We took reverential leave of Atahualpa, and rode back with altogether different feelings than we had come a few hours ago.

We had seen the Inca in the midst of an army against which it would be senseless to fight. We numbered three hundred ; we expected another three hundred in reinforcements from San Miguele. What could six hundred do against these myriads ? The Peru camp had displayed such pomp and wealth that it had roused our apprehension of the defensive power of this people which we had hitherto underestimated. With it went breeding and behaviour that spoke of a much higher cultural level than we had met in the coastal districts.

Gold we had seen there enough. My eyes had not sufficed to take it all in. Farne had indeed not lied, nor even exaggerated ; no doubt that we had attained the goal of our glowing desires when we set foot in the interior of this magic land. But how were we to obtain this gold ? Was it not more terrible to stand one step from the realisation of the dream and have to abandon it, than to be still playing with the shimmering hope ?

We brought dejection with us into the camp, and our comrades were infected with it. The feeling was not diminished as the night sank down, and we saw the camp fires of the Peruvians gleaming across from the mountain slopes, dense as the stars in heaven.

But here the strength and daring of the General gave us firm hold. He was filled with satisfaction at the inescapable position into which we had placed ourselves. Now things had gone as far as he had wanted them. He went about among all the men and spoke to them with feeling and conviction. They must trust to themselves and to Providence that had already led them through so many terrible trials, he said. Even if the enemy outnumbered them ten thousand times, what did it matter if Heaven was with them ? He appealed to their ambition, and promised them untold wealth. By presenting our enterprise, as he had done so often before, as a crusade against the unbelievers, he roused the extinguishing sparks of enthusiasm anew.

Then he summoned the officers to council. We came into the house in which he lived with his two brothers, and there he outlined to us the daring plan upon which he had resolved. He wanted to lure the Inca into an ambush, and make him prisoner in the sight of his whole army.

We all went pale. We tried to dissuade him. We said it was a most dangerous, a desperate move. But he countered that by

asking us drily whether our present situation was not desperate ? Whether we were not threatened with destruction on all sides, and if it were not too late to think of flight, and in what direction would we fly ? The very landscape had turned into a prison. To stand our ground was no less dangerous ; to attack the Inca in open field were madness. So all that was left was to seize his person. This, he anticipated, would have such an extraordinary effect on the country that all other measures would in comparison be inadequate and paltry.

I can see him still in front of me, gazing round him, grimly, questioningly, his clenched fist on his breast. He saw only sunken brows, for his plan filled us with the utmost anxiety. Yet he knew that he could count on every one of us, come what may. His will was an irresistible force.

We returned to our dwellings and tents, but not to sleep. My eyes at least did not close that night. I lay there and listened ■ the dark voice of the earth, and the evil demon whispering in my breast. And that is how it must have been with the rest.

To me, as ■ all of us, the country was as mysterious as the sphinx, a picture of unfathomable happenings, and godless existence ; gigantic nature, too, even richer in promise than in gifts. The lofty view of the mountain, as it rose out of the sea, a group of terrifying giants, the glimmering white glaciers above, like celestial crowns, that never melted under the sun of the equator, at most under the annihilating heart of their own volcanic fire, the sheer slopes of the sierra, with fissured walls of porphyry and granite and raging mountain streams and crevasses, and inside, in the bowels of the mountains treasures of gems, copper, silver and gold.

Gold ; above all gold ! The dream of dreams ! The ravines full, the lodes full, scattered in the rock, green-glimmering veins beneath the ice, red-glowing ingots in the hollows, in the plumes of birds, and in the sand of the steppes, in the roots of the flowers and the running of the springs.

To win gold we had left our home, and braved all perils, the hazards of a life in an unknown world. I had squandered my heritage, had wandered about the towns of Castile, breadless

maintaining with effort the bearing of a nobleman, and when want had gripped me by the throat, I had heard the call of Francesco Pizarro, who had just arrived in Madrid to conclude a contract with the Crown. And when I had pledged myself to him and his cause, my mind was turned solely towards winning wealth, and in this, there was no distinction between me and all my fellows, knights and simple soldiers alike. All Spain, all Europe was in such a feverish intoxication that children and aged, the grandees at court, and the vagabonds along the country roads, the bishop and the peasant, the Emperor and his humblest servant had no other thought than the treasures of New India. This ravaging fever had seized me, too, and had penetrated to the depth of my soul, where it extinguished all light.

## VI

We knew of temples whose roofs and stairs were of gold. We had seen vessels and ornaments and raiment of pure gold. We had been told of gardens in which the flowers were masterly imitations in gold, especially the Indian corn, where the golden ear was half-enclosed by broad silver leaves, while the light tufts, daintily wrought of silver, hung down from the top. Gold seemed in this land as ordinary as in our country iron or tin, and in fact the Peruvians knew neither iron nor tin.

What was incomprehensible was that to people here, gold, the final goal, the most ardent desire of all the rest of humanity, meant nothing. It was not a means of exchange, it gave no title to possession, it was not a measure, not a sign of rank, it was not an incentive to activity, it neither lured nor tormented, and made no one bad and no one good, no one powerful and no one weak. One might think that it was not gold at all, but some other metal or noble element. But it was not so. Possession was regulated among them differently than anywhere else in the world, in a fabulous and to our spirit disquieting manner.

It was arranged according to the rank of the people. Millions upon millions absolutely equal, and above all these, endlessly high, the Inca. Such deification of a mortal man there had as far as I was aware never been and perhaps would never be again. I had, little by little, obtained many proofs of it, and heard many reports. From him flowed prosperity, and misfortune, all grace.

all honour, all possession. On his fringed Borla he wore two feathers of the exceedingly rare bird, the Coraquenque, that lived in a desert between the mountains, and might be slain only to grace the princely head.

I was told that in the dim past the people had lived without light or law. Then the sun, the great light and mother of mankind had taken compassion on their degraded life and sent them two of her children to bring them the blessings of civilised life. The superhuman pair, brother and sister, at the same time husband and wife, came across the high plains ; they carried a golden wedge with them, and they had been commanded to make their home where the wedge sank into the earth without effort. The miracle happened in the fertile valley of Cuzco ; the golden wedge vanished into the earth. These two beings of light were the progenitors of the Inca, and the whole land was his possession.

The entire area of the kingdom was divided into three parts, one for the sun, one for the Prince, and one, the largest, for the people. Every Peruvian had to marry at the age of twenty, and then the country provided him with a home and a piece of land. But the partition of the land was renewed each year, and the holding increased or diminished according to the size of the family. The fields belonging to the sun had to be cultivated first ; then those of the old people, the sick, the widows, all those who for one reason or another could not look after their affairs themselves ; then came the land that was to provide for one's own needs ; but everyone was obliged to help his neighbour if he had a large family of youngsters. The land of the Inca was last. And that was a great festival, in which the entire nation joined. At dawn the assembly was announced, from the top of a tower, and men, women and children appeared in their finest raiment, did their work happily for their lord, singing their ancient songs. So I was told, and it is true.

Common property was the plough, the threshing-floor, the harvest and the bread. Common property were the herds. At a fixed time the sheep were sheared, the wool was delivered to the public storehouse, and each family received as much, and the women were given for spinning and weaving as much as they required for their needs. All had to work, from child to matron, unless they were too feeble to hold the distaff. No one was allowed to be idle. Idleness was a crime.

Common property were the mines, the foundries, the sawmills, the windmills, the quarries, the bridges, the streets, the forests, the houses, the gardens. No man could become rich, no man could become poor. No spendthrift could squander away his possessions, no speculator ruin his children through rash enterprises. There were no beggars, there were no parasites. If a man became poor through misfortune—for by his own fault it was impossible—the State was ready to keep him, and it did not humiliate him by doing him a kindness. It put him back, as the law required, on a level with the rest. Ambition and avarice were unknown. So were restlessness and the diseased spirit of discontent, political passion and selfish effort. No one had any property. Everything belonged to everybody, and everything, not only the land, was the possession of the Inca, this being of celestial descent.

Now came the doubtful question, whether this was savagery or development, a form of barbaric and childlike existence, or progressive and lofty. Should one despise it and therefore destroy, or should it be spared, perhaps even praised as a desirable form of human society? It could not be without importance for us whether we had to deal with crude, dull slaves, tools of a tyrant of unexampled power, or nobler and purer creatures than those of the Christian world.

For me, I could find neither a yea nor nay, though on closer reflection it rather seemed that we had to do with depraved people, who denied human institutions that were thousands of years old, and that could not be overthrown without harm to the entire human race. To give up property meant giving up reward and honour, ambition and distinction, aspiration and the love of chance, and all that divides mine from thine and me from thee; a conception too horrible and blasphemous to be met otherwise than by the firm resolve to wipe it off the face of the earth.

So it seemed to me that night. I was not of the same opinion afterwards. I tossed restlessly on my scanty couch, and waited for the day to break.

## VII

It was a day that began with betrayal. That must be confessed. And it ended in bloodshed. It degraded the Inca and his people for ever and eternity and transformed the land into a shambles.

That is no longer to be concealed, and the signs are still visible to-day, while I write this.

The trumpet-sound called us to arms. The cavalry were disposed behind the buildings, the infantry inside. The hours passed, and we had already begun to think that our preparations had been to no purpose, when a messenger arrived from the Inca to say that he was on his way.

But it was not till midday that the Peruvians were sighted in the broad highroad. In front came numerous servants, whose task it was to clear the road of every obstacle, however slight, stones, animals, leaves. High above the crowd sat Atahualpa on a throne that eight of the chief nobles carried on their shoulders, with sixteen wearing costly robes pacing on either side.

The seat of the throne was of solid gold, sending out rays like a sun. To right and left hung down rugs made with almost incomprehensible artistry out of the gay feathers of tropical birds. Many of our people cast greedy glances towards this gorgeous object, of almost incalculable value, but of all those eyes mine were certainly the greediest. I could not take them off the shimmering splendour, and my heart beat three times as fast.

Round his throat the Inca wore a chain of incredibly large emeralds ; about his short-cut hair was twined a wreath of artificial flowers of onyx, turquoise, silver and gold ; his bearing was so calm that it misled one into thinking that it was a figure of bronze sitting there.

As the front ranks of the procession entered the Square, they opened out towards both aides for the royal entourage. Amid the soundless silence of his people Atahualpa gazed round searchingly, for of us there was no one to be seen, while we could observe every face and every movement of theirs.

At this moment, as had been previously arranged, Pater Valverde, our chaplain in the field, stepped out. Holding the Bible in his right hand, and the crucifix in his left, he approached the Inca and spoke to him. Felipillo, who hovered behind him like his shadow, as sinister as he was indispensable, translated sentence for sentence, as well or as badly as he was able.

The Dominican called upon Atahualpa to submit to the Emperor, who was the mightiest ruler of the world, and had commanded his servant Pizarro to take possession of the lands of the heathens.

The Inca did not stir.

Pater Valverde called upon him for the second time to submit, and added that if he would undertake to pay tribute to the Emperor, he would protect him as a loyal vassal, and stand by him in his need.

Again there was the same silence.

The monk raised his voice for the third time, and in the name of our Lord and Saviour demanded that he should turn to our holy faith, by which alone he might hope for salvation, and escape damnation and hell-fire.

Other words and other ideas were needed here than those at the Pater's command. He was a simple man, of little education, and he had not the tongue nor the fire to move the heart of the idolator, and make it receptive to the teaching of Christ, which we all humbly obey.

The Inca did not answer this time either. An immobile figure, he sat on his throne and looked down at the monk, half-surprised, half-vexed. The monk stared helplessly down at the ground; his face grew pale, vainly he sought illumination and new appeals, then suddenly he turned round and lifted up his crucifix like a banner.

The General saw that the time had come and that he must delay no longer. He waved a white scarf, the cannon were fired, the battlecry of St. Iago resounded, the riders broke out of their concealment like a dammed stream, and, paralysed by surprise, deafened by the shouting and the banging of the muskets and the thunder of the two field guns, and choked and blinded by the smoke that spread in sulphurous clouds across the Square, the Inca's people did not know what they were doing, where they should fly. High and low were trampled down alike beneath the impact of the riders, and I saw only a coil of red, blue and yellow colours in front of me. No one put up any resistance, nor had they the arms that would have been needed. After a quarter of an hour, all the roads to escape were choked with dead, and so great was their fear of death that many of them convulsively broke down the walls of baked clay that fenced off the Square with their bare hands.

I can no longer recall how long the terrible massacre lasted. My spirit was bewildered by the sight of the golden throne-seat, on which the Inca still sat. I wanted to secure it at all costs.

Some magic force pulled me into the circle of its rays, and I thrust down everything that stood in my way. Those who were loyal to the Inca hurled themselves in my way and that of the other horsemen, tore some out of their saddles, or offered their own breasts to shield the beloved lord. With their last dying gasp they still clutched hold of the horses.

I was always sweeping three or four on with me, and, then one fell dead, another took his place. The throne carried by eight nobles was tossed backwards and forwards like a boat on an agitated sea, as the terrible crush ebbed and flowed.

Atahualpa gazed immobile at the bloodshed and destruction, gloomily conscious of his powerlessness to prevent it. The brief twilight came to an end: the night fell. Exhausted by our murderous work, we were afraid of only one thing, that the Inca might escape. Andrea della Torre and Cristoval de Peralta rushed at him, to thrust their swords in his breast. But the General interposed himself like a storm incarnate; everything depended on the life of the Prince. As he flung out his arm to protect him, he received a rather severe wound in the wrist from Cristoval de Peralta.

At the same moment four of the throne-bearers fell simultaneously. The load was too heavy for the rest. They stumbled to their knees in front of a heap of slain. The Inca would have fallen to the ground, had not the General and della Torre caught him in their arms. While the soldier Miguel de Estete tore the kingly Borla from his head, Peralta and I seized the throne, he on one side, I on the other, and for ten long, terrible seconds we stared at each other with bloodshot eyes like mortal enemies.

Atahualpa was taken as a captive into the nearest building, and twelve men were placed on guard over him.

A spectral calm had spread over the Square and the surrounding streets. But from a certain hour of the night there sounded from the mountains the lament of the Peruvians robbed of their divinity, swelling and subsiding, growing more anguished and wilder, till the dawn.

## VIII

The soldiery were given permission to go out in search of loot, and they brought from the Inca's camp many gold and silver vessels, and many bales of stuffs so finely woven and so perfect

in the art of colour-blending that we had never before seen anything like it.

All the spoil was placed in a house set aside for the purpose, to be distributed at a later date, after deducting a fifth part for the Crown of Castile. But Cristoval Peralta and I had, with the assistance of several people, concealed the Throne of the Inca. One of them betrayed us to Pedro Pizarro, whereupon the General made us come to him and with a sinister air demanded that we surrender the Throne. We did forthwith, for we trembled at his menacing brow.

To keep myself from harm, I took the soldiers and raided the houses in the city, and whatever there was of value we robbed. The natives were seized, and we tore all jewels and ornaments from their bodies. Singly or in groups our people went through the countryside and set fire to the houses, after they had plundered them. They broke into the Temple, killed or expelled the priests and dragged out whatever they could carry, gay stuffs and beautiful vessels. But it all did not suffice for them, they lusted for more.

It did not suffice for me, either. I lusted for more.

One evening, as a detachment came back into the town from a looting expedition that had been particularly successful, the captive Inca stepped out from the inner rooms of his house into the pillared hall and watched the soldiers unload their booty, while others came up, took the gold and silver objects in their hands, showed them round, felt them, caressed them, and by their whole demeanour betrayed the unquenchable covetousness and unreasonable envious fear that raged in them.

I stood in the middle of the Square and had gradually focused my gaze entirely on the Inca. He did not quite seem to comprehend what was going on in front of his eyes. As he stood there, making an effort to think, Felipillo approached him, and spoke a few words to him, softly, with a hypocritical air of humility. I heard afterwards from Hernando de Soto, who had it from Atahualpa himself, that what Felipillo said was : "They want gold. They whine for gold, they cry for gold, they tear each other to pieces for gold. Ask them the price of your liberty, and you will be able to purchase it with gold. There is nothing in the world that they will not give you for gold, their wives, their children, their souls, even the souls of their friends."

At that moment I had but a glimmering of the meaning of those true and terrible words. What moved me profoundly was the expression of horror and meditation in Atahualpa's face. It is certain that from that moment he thought incessantly only of this one thing, for he could not bring himself to believe that one could for so paltry a thing as gold win something so important as liberty, that one could buy anything at all with it, obtain anything at all with it. To have something denoted something entirely different in his conception than in ours. The idea of buying anything with gold must have astounded and disquieted him to the utmost. At that hour, seeing my gold-intoxicated comrades on the one side, and the dumbfounded Inca on the other, it became for the first time clear to me how strange we were to him, inconceivably, horribly strange, not like people from a world that he did not know, but like creatures of an altogether different and incomprehensible species.

## IX

But now his servants and retainers came to Caxamalca, his courtiers and his women, and implored with uplifted hands that they should be admitted to their lord. They said that their lives were consecrated to the Inca since birth, and that away from him they must die according to the law of the land.

The General selected about twenty of them, including Prince Curacas, the half-brother of the Inca, who loved him intensely. He was a handsome, gentle lad, resembling the Prince in face and figure. The rest the General sent away, and, as we heard soon after, they all committed suicide.

But there came also thousands of other inhabitants of the countryside and the towns, who asked to see their lord. They were admitted into Caxamalca only when certainty had been established that they had no arms on them. It had not been necessary. They were in a state of utter confusion. They could not believe, they could not comprehend that the Son of the Sun was a captive. Full of anguished wonder they stared at us, and if one of us spoke to them, they quivered with superstitious fear. A supernatural power seemed to hold them fast outside the walls that enclosed the Inca. Many wept, many only sighed softly, many lay on their knees, their heads bowed in their arms, and at

night I saw their eyes shine in the darkness, while from across the mountains came the sound of lamenting.

The whole country was in mourning and despair.

From the sixth day, the General transferred to me the duty of guarding the Inca, and for this important office gave me the command of fifteen of the most reliable soldiers.

I could now observe the captive at all times and from the closest proximity. He, for his part, gave me no attention. There was only one among us for whom he appeared to have any feeling; that was Hernando de Soto, who now had constant access to him. The General looked favourably upon that, for he wished to secure in this way the opportunity of learning something about the Inca's thoughts and plans. De Soto gave him a great deal of attention. His efforts to acquaint him with our tongue and make himself understood were not entirely without success.

Atahualpa spent the nights practically without any sleep, squatting on his haunches with legs crossed. It was as if he grudged every step and every movement of his head. Of the food placed before him, he touched only what was essential to keep him alive. For his women he had not a single glance. Only with Prince Curacas he conversed at times softly.

The General showed his Royal captive considerable respect, and endeavoured to banish the gloom that appeared in his manner, notwithstanding his artificial equanimity. When he came, the Inca rose and regarded him questioningly, waiting, glowingly cold.

Once it happened that Pizarro, through the mouth of the interpreter, asked him not to be dejected by his misfortune; he only shared the fate of all princes who had resisted the Christians; and for that heaven had wished to punish him. But the Spaniards were a noble nation, and pardoned those who penitently submitted.

At that I saw, and the General noticed it as well, that the Inca looked at the golden buckle of his shoe, and that the strange smile of which I have spoken, flitted across his face. Then he just raised his left hand and Prince Curacas, who stood at his side, fell on his knee and timidly quivering, touched the barely outstretched fingers with his lips.

## XI

To keep to the sequence of events, I must relate how Prince Curacas was set upon by one of my soldiers, and what thereupon happened.

It was early one morning that the youth wanted to leave the pillared hall, in order to get some fruit for his master, who had expressed a desire for some. The soldier Pedro Alcon, who was on guard, would not let him pass, and when Curacas tried to explain by means of gestures what he wanted, Alcon caught hold of him by the scruff of the neck and pushed him back. Infuriated, Curacas dashed his fist in his face. Pedro Alcon drew his sword, and Curacas, frightened, fled. The soldier followed him shouting threats, determined to avenge the insult with his blood.

I had just got up from my sleep, and when I heard the noise I rushed to the Inca's room. I saw that he was looking in one direction, and when I turned my gaze there, I saw the Prince flying like the wind towards the inner chamber. So numerous were the rooms through which the frightened lad ran, that his figure seemed at first quite tiny. Silently, with his arms flying upward, he ran like a roe through the long series of rooms, with the soldier clumsily following, with drawn sword and thundering boots. At last Curacas reached his master, fell to the ground before him, and embraced his legs. Pedro Alcon, breathless, foaming at the mouth, made to seize him. I cried out to him, but he paid no heed, and looked at me grimly. Atahualpa placed his left hand on his brother's head, and with the right he motioned the soldier back. His gesture was so regal, that Pedro Alcon staggered. But only for a moment. Then he swung his sword with a savage oath, and it would have fallen on the lovely boy, had not two women slaves thrown themselves in front of him to receive the blow. One of them, caught in the neck, collapsed without a sound, streaming blood.

Then Alcon held back. His gaze met that of the Inca, and with brutal and daring stubbornness demanded from him the life of the Prince. I must remark at this point that the prospect of possessing vast treasures had made our people feel mutinous about this time, and that we officers had to be very cautious in enforcing our orders, to keep them in hand.

With his left hand still spread over the head of his favourite,

Atahualpa unfastened a gold clasp from his robe, and offered it to Pedro Alcon. I observed something uncertain in the movement, some hesitation as though he did not place much trust in the idea, and did not dare to hope for its success.

Alcon took the trinket, weighed it in his hand, and shrugged his shoulders. The Inca now took off the thick gold band from his left arm, and gave it to the soldier. He weighed it again, pursed his lips together, and gazed unresolved in front of him. Then Atahualpa, with a haste unusual in him, tore the emerald chain from his throat, and threw it into the insolent, outstretched hand of the soldier. Now Alcon nodded satisfied, hid the ornaments in his leather jerkin and sheathed his sword.

Atahualpa stared at him, dazed, as if a phantom had turned real. For here was the proof that one could purchase a life from these strangers with gold. But it was so strange to him, so unbelievable, that he stood there for a long time, lost in amazement, from which not even the voice of his favourite could rouse him.

## XII

The same day the General came with many knights to Atahualpa, ■ apologise for what had happened in the morning. He promised an unbiased investigation and that the man would be punished.

At this, the Inca, seeking his words painfully, and addressing them haltingly to Felipillo, said that if he would be given his liberty he would pledge himself to cover the entire flooring of the hall in which we sat with gold.

The General and we others received his offer in silence, and when Atahualpa obtained no answer, he added with great emphasis that he would not only cover the flooring, but fill the chamber with gold as high as his hand would reach.

We stared at him amazed, for we thought it the boast of a man too eager to regain his liberty to consider whether he could carry out his promises. The General motioned to us to move aside, to express our opinion. His brother Hernando and his Secretary Xeres wanted the offer rejected. De Soto and I were for acceptance. Pizarro himself was undecided. He had superlative ideas about the wealth of the country, especially the treasures of the capital, Cuzco, where reliable reports said the temples were roofed

with gold, the walls hung with cloth of gold, and even the bricks were of gold. There must be something in all this, he believed. He thought it advisable to agree to the Inca's proposal, for in that way he would have all the gold at one stroke, and would prevent the Peruvians hiding it or getting it out of the way.

He therefore said to Atahualpa that he would give him his liberty, ■ he would really be able to pay as much gold for it as he claimed. He called for a piece of red chalk ; it was brought, and he drew a line along the four walls at the height indicated by the Inca. The chamber was 37 feet wide, 52 feet long, and the red line along the walls was  $9\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the floor.

This space was to be filled with gold. The Inca asked for two months' time. The conditions were written down by the Secretary, Xeres, and the document was sealed.

We were so excited by the arrangement and the contract that our voices faltered and our faces glowed feverishly whenever we spoke about it. We were dubious ; doubt was mingled with fear and bombastic hopefulness. Very soon the news spread in the camp ; the soldiers went mad with joy ; they attached to it the most extravagant dreams about the future, and sleep and play and pastime became to them a burden.

And it was no different with me.

### XIII

The agreement had scarcely been concluded when the Inca sent messengers to all the towns of his realm, with orders to remove all gold vessels and objects from the Royal palaces, the temples and gardens and public buildings, and bring them without delay to Caxamalca.

The distances were immense, though the wisely-instituted system of runners made it less apparent than in our countries. At first, the consignments came in dribs and drabs. But after a week, much larger quantities arrived every day, and were deposited in the treasure room over which I kept strict guard.

Always in the evening, the Inca made his way to the threshold of the chamber in which we stored the gold that had been brought from all the provinces of his realm, measured with a composed glance the area that still remained unfilled and seemed to calculate how far off it was from the red line that was his line of fate.

Though every day great quantities of the gleaming metal came streaming along, the pile seemed to increase but slowly.

When he lifted his eyes from the top of the pile to the inexorable line it was as if he were resolving the empty space into the number of days that divided him from liberty. And round him stood silently and sadly his men and women servants, and read from his beloved features something for which there was among them no words. For there were many things for which they had no words, that we differently constituted creatures could describe without effort, and yet without real meaning.

It will be difficult for me to convey an idea of my feelings, and still more difficult to indicate the nature of those that I presumed in the breast of Atahualpa, whose person and being roused in me increasing uneasiness and anxiety from hour to hour and from day to day. I do not know what it was. I cannot give the reason ; often it seemed to me that I must slip right into him to find his heart and his inmost thoughts. His alien type of humanity implanted in me awe, something singularly innocent, singularly mysterious, so tender that it hurt to approach it, yet I could not take my eyes or mind away from it, and it covered me with a film of sadness.

At first he was to me only the lord of gold, cursedly ensnared in black heathenism and given up to the spirits of evil, and I did not ask myself by what right I damned him, I on whom the constant sight of the gold acted like a corroding poison, and whose brain knew nothing but gold and the glitter of gold, and the promises held out by gold and the voluptuous gratifications that it would bring.

Then my soul penetrated with rare force into his, so that I felt it like a curse, and soon like a voice from above, and as something that brought remorse and sorrow. So I was sometimes as though double, he and I in one, and the gold oppressed me, and his soul oppressed me ; how is one to explain it ?

I saw that he was concerned not only with the collection and with calculating the growth of the gold ; something else wracked and tormented him—our presence, our existence and all we did. I was gradually convinced of that. It began with curiosity—the language, the sound of the voices, walk and behaviour, anger and laughter, clothing and customs, it was all so different that it made him hold his breath, unexplorable as the world beyond the sun,

contemptuous and gloomy, each to the extreme, so that he could not separate the one from the other. If he looked into our faces, that resembled tanned leather, he encountered a glance from one or another that had no shame and no concealment in it, so that he shrank back as though he had touched something unclean.

But since the gold lay in the house, and we all, from the leader to the lowest soldier, greedily watched it mounting up, he was filled with fear and horror of us, and often to such an extent that he shut his eyes when he saw one of us. That is the truth. I experienced it.

There were always a number of our people besieging the window, which had bars across it, and staring with glassy eyes into the chamber. They smelt the gold, they tasted it. I knew that. It was the same with me. Sometimes one of them came close to the chamber, spying on the blazing yellow treasure, and his features became contorted into a terrible expression between tenderness and hunger; his hand reached out to clutch, and his eye flashed a side-glance, as if he feared that there was somebody else there who would snatch it away from him. Everyone of them had the same fear, that somebody else would be there before him. I had the same fear myself.

I observed not infrequently that at night, while his people slept, Atahualpa sat straight up, listening. There was always a scraping and shuffling, a murmuring and rustling, and if the moon happened to shine and its rays lit up the gold, one saw his fervent, wide-open eyes, in which there was a dim light, mingled with gold-shine and moon-shine, and at such times they were like wild beasts, slinking along to drinking-pools by secret paths out of fear of other and stronger beasts.

A comparatively aged soldier, Jose Maria Lopez, a greybeard, with a heavily-scarred face, once took a gold brick into his hand, and bewildered astonishment, half-insane joy contorted his features and left them pallid. It was twilight. He had taken off his shoes and crept up barefoot; one of the Inca's people had observed him suspiciously, followed him without a sound and fell on him with a hoarse cry, and clutched him with both hands round his neck, so that Lopez crumpled up with a rattle in his throat.

Another time a number of them followed a Peruvian bearer who had arrived laden with gold vessels, and ferociously tore his load from his back, as though they wanted to tear the skin off

him as well ; then they counted and counted, weighed and examined with trembling fingers, and looked at each other like wolves.

In that way, Atahualpa found out that gold had a worse effect on all of us than chicha on his own people, an intoxicating drink that was permitted only at certain temple festivities. But he had to ask himself the question—they can't drink the yellow metal ; they only absorb through their eyes its glitter and its colour ; what does it communicate to them ? They do not use it for ornament—their bodies are as devoid of ornament as shadows ; what advantage ■ it to them to possess gold ?

He certainly cherished such ideas. He also gave wonderful expression to them in conversation with Hernando de Soto. He said approximately that we lacked the profound sense of duty, the obedience of the blood that sees the leader as the divinely-appointed, the human sun ; if we submitted to the lord it was with secret aversion and concealed animosity, as though we had equal rights with him, and equal claims to all the good things of the earth, only we did not dare to oppose him, because he might have ways open to him, or knew magic spells that were not available to us. Why, he asked, in astonishment, do they lyingly drop their eyes in front of him, and open them shamelessly and follow him with their glances as soon as he has turned away ?

Hernando de Soto found no answer to that, and he did not conceal it from me that he had stood in front of the Inca like a stupid schoolboy. To me his inner life gradually became a vision ; with his eyes I saw the growing impatience of my comrades ; with his eyes their expressions full of hatred and apprehension. I realised that in his worst dreams he had never imagined that such creatures as we were existed on this earth. And when he discovered that they did, and got to know us, a profound melancholy descended upon him, that paralysed his heart and his hand, and he allowed that to happen that was so incomprehensible to us—he submitted to his fate without resistance, and sent no secret orders to his subjects ; so that hundreds of thousands of armed warriors stood inactive, a devoted army, to whom their Prince was the substance and the goal of their existence, and for whom but a flicker of his eye would have sufficed, and the three hundred invaders would have soaked the earth they had insulted with their blood.

This inactivity proceeded from Atahualpa, from his profound knowledge of the spirit of darkness that had taken command, and against which resistance was futile.

I know very well what I am saying, and I am ready to meet anyone who will challenge me to render an account, as a Christian, for using such words. But was it Christian teaching, our great faith and sacred symbol that spread through this land like an incurable disease? The land was sick; the souls of its inhabitants were sick; disgust and horror loomed over it, and disgust and horror flowed from its centre of life, from Atahualpa, who was its peak and its fulfilment, and who had to look on while the strangers plundered the temples, dishonoured the virgins of the Sun, laid waste the gardens, trampled down the fields, his transmitted, sacerdotal possessions, for thousands of years. He could not resist. The world had become impure. And what he felt his people felt also, and it returned to him like an echo in the songs of the night, in which lay anguish and the premonition of the end.

#### XIV

They brought the Inca a ball-shaped opal that belonged to Huoco, his favourite sister and wife, who dwelt on an island in the Titicaca sea. She sent him a message by the bearer that she was prepared for death, and that she would die if he would command it.

He stared in silence at the glorious stone, and his servants and young women averted their gaze.

They also brought him the tamed puma that in the garden of the Royal palace always lay at his feet. The beast was sad, refused food, and died on the third day.

The same evening Prince Curaca was found dead in one of the rooms, with a dagger in his breast. None of us doubted that Pedro Alcon, infuriated by the sentence that the General had pronounced upon him, had gratified his lust for vengeance, notwithstanding the huge ransom that he had taken from the Inca. But the culprit kept it dark, and he was not betrayed and was not detected.

Atahualpa stared at the corpse as he had stared at the opal. His anguish was like a smile.

In the plain stood Callchuchima, the Inca's field marshal, with

thirty thousand men. The capture of his lord, so suddenly and violently accomplished by a species that seemed to him to have dropped down from the clouds, had utterly demoralised the veteran. The General prevailed upon him to have a meeting, and demanded that he should come to Caxamalca. But he declined. Then Pizarro persuaded the Inca to command him to come, and immediately Callchuchima set out. He arrived in the town with a vast following. His vassals carried him in an open litter, and the inhabitants paid him the respect due to the first servant of the king. But he, when he went to Atahualpa, approached him barefoot, like the humblest, and with a stone on his back, the symbol of unquestioning obedience. He knelt down, kissed his Prince's hands and feet, and bathed them with his tears.

I was a witness of this meeting, and I cannot deny that it moved me deeply. But I could detect no such emotion in Atahualpa, not even a sign of satisfaction at the presence of his most loyal councillor. He simply bid him welcome. Then, without saying a word, he handed him the beautiful opal that his sister-consort had sent him. It was Huoco's death sentence, and the veteran Callchuchima tottered out, sobbing and kept from falling by his servants' supporting arms.

## XV

Meanwhile it came about that the interpreter Felipillo, driven by his renegade insurgency further down the road of treachery, pursued one of the Inca's young women to possess her carnally. Such a thing would previously never have occurred to him in his wildest dreams ; it was the greatest offence that a Peruvian could commit. Atahualpa said to the General that such an insult against him by so depraved a being was harder to bear than his captivity.

Felipillo's hatred of his previously all-powerful master now knew no bounds, and he determined to destroy him. He accused him to the General of having conspired with Callchuchima to fall upon the Spaniards and wipe them out to the last man. He maintained this calumny with the most forcible oaths.

More inclined to believe than really believing, Pizarro paid heed to his words. It opened a way for him to withdraw his dangerous

promise to liberate the Prince, and he was disposed to break his undertaking, by any method, force or craft.

## XVI

Now that the gold deposits that had been brought in reached to within about three hand-breadths of the red mark, our people were no longer to be controlled, clamouring that it should be divided among them. The demand was not unwelcome to him, because it facilitated his sinister plans. Hernando de Soto and I could not, in fact, rid ourselves afterwards of the suspicion that this unruly impatience among our men had been deliberately fostered.

So that the distribution should be just and equitable, it was decided to melt down the whole of the gold and convert it into bars, for the spoil was made up of countless different objects, and the quality of the gold was not the same in all.

The very next day the treasure-room was cleared out, strict watch being kept while this was done. Then the General called in a number of native goldsmiths, whom he instructed to divest all these wonderful vessels—basins, goblets, ewers, plate, salvers, vases, candlesticks, temple ornaments, bricks, censers, idols, bracelets, masks, all the mural-decorations, the pillar-shafts, the chains, the religious insignias, of their artistic form, and melt them back into their crude state.

I remember among others a gold fountain that threw up a glistening ray of gold, while golden birds and golden lizards appeared to be playing on the edge of the water that was wrought in marvellous imitation out of gold. The craftsmen who now had to destroy what they had themselves fashioned with love and effort, worked day and night, but there was so much to be melted down that after a month had gone they were still not finished.

Meanwhile Don Almagro, for years the General's comrade and friend, had arrived from San Miguele, on the sea, with his men. They demanded that we should share the treasure with them, and in such a challenging manner as though we were their menials. Quarrels and brawls broke out ; the streets, the courtyards, the houses and the tents rang with the noise of shouting, and the clash of weapons, and envy and greed poisoned the minds of everyone, breaking into our sleep at night.

In the evening, Atahualpa came out of the hall of his prison,

and gazed with inscrutable eyes across the Square. I stood on the staircase, close at his side. He wore a cloak of batkins, as soft and smooth as silk, and about his head the Llauta, a shawl of the finest texture and shimmering with many colours.

Just then, two soldiers, one belonging to our party and one to Almagro's men, quarrelled over a golden tortoise that both desired and wished to save from the melting-pot. Soon they were facing each other with drawn swords, a thrust or two, a cry, and the one belonging to our party, Jacopo Cuellar by name, sank to the ground, still clutching the golden tortoise in his death agony, still defending it against the greedy fingers of the other reaching out to take it from him. I pulled him away.

The Inca seemed drawn there as by a spell. The guards encircled him distrustfully, but he paid no heed to them. As he gazed down at the corpse, his eye darkened, and gave one the impression that he would like the breast of the dead man to turn to glass, so that he could look inside, and discover out of what material this incomprehensibly alien soul was made. I saw that his revulsion was almost choking him, and when he turned his eyes to the few servants who had followed him, he said to them in a soft, broken voice, indicating the motionless body: "Look, the golden tortoise is drinking blood."

I had by now learnt enough of their language to understand these childish, horror-stricken words.

## XVII

At last the day came when he demanded his liberty from the General, since he was able to show that he had complied with the conditions imposed. He demanded his liberty, though he felt that it would be denied him, though there was an even blacker fear in him.

Hernando de Soto who had increasingly won the captive's confidence, and rendered him many little services and kindnesses, was his intermediary to the General. Pizarro heard him out, but refused to give any definite answer. A few hours later he informed the Inca through the Treasurer, Riquelme, who had come to us with Don Almagro, that the ransom had not been completely paid, the room had not been filled right up to the red mark.

Atahualpua was astounded, and he argued that, though this

was true, it was not his fault ; if they had only waited another three days all the gold required would have been there ; besides, ■ was an easy matter to supply the missing gold and make up the full quantity.

The General shrugged his shoulders, and said that he could not agree to that. He knew why : consignments were still arriving from the various places, and were being stopped outside the town. He had a proclamation drawn up and communicated in camp, releasing the Inca, indeed, from all further obligation to pay ransom, but at the same time declaring that his safety and the safety of his army made it imperative that Atahualpa should remain in captivity till reinforcements arrived from Panama.

When de Soto heard of this crafty manoeuvring out of the contract, and then read the proclamation for himself, he went to the General and there was a violent argument. The General said that he had exact information about Atahualpa's intrigues, and the soldiers, particularly Almagro's men, demanded his death.

De Soto was taken aback. He swore that the information was false, and described Almagro's men as a pack of cut-throats and highwaymen. On de Soto's insistence, the General, in seemingly good-humoured agreement, decided to go with him to Atahualpa and, eye to eye, unfold to him the accusations made against him. His face would show whether the charges were based on fact, said de Soto, for he was quite incapable of simulation.

Accompanied by de Soto, he entered Atahualpa's chamber—it was about the fifth hour after noon—and repeated to him the disquieting talk. "What treachery have you forged against me," he said darkly, "who trusted you like a brother?"

De Soto had, in passing, beckoned to me from the vestibule, and I stood behind the General, facing the Inca.

"You are jesting," replied Atahualpa, who probably did not realise the importance of his avowal. "You are always jesting with me. How can I and my people think of doing you harm? How can eagles, however brave, think of rising against lightning and earthquake? I beg you, do not jest with me in this fashion."

He said this with absolute composure and naturalness, smiling a little, which Pizarro took as evidence of his knavery. He spoke in our language, which he had in these few months of captivity, in his contact with de Soto, with me and with other knights,

learnt to speak much better than I or any of our people could speak his language.

"Am I not a defenceless man in your hand?" he continued in his gentle voice. "How could I cherish the intentions you ascribe to me, since if they were realised, I should fall the first victim? You know my people ill if you believe that a rising is possible without my command, for the very birds in my dominion would not dare to fly without my will."

This picture of peculiarly tragic boasting in his present state moved us involuntarily to scoffing, while his nobles silently fell on their knees, thus confirming once more my previous impression that his vassals gave him greater homage than was enjoyed by any other ruler on earth; his power extended to the most secret activities, to the very thoughts of every one of his subjects. All the laws of life must have seemed to him abrogated, all the laws of nature and the ways of things destroyed, since he was at the mercy of the will or ill-will of a band of aliens, evil spectres such as we were to him, he without whose permission not a bird in his dominions would dare to fly.

The General made him understand that there would be a consultation to decide his fate, and left the room.

That night, Hernando de Soto was ordered to take fifty horsemen and proceed on a scouting expedition in the mountains. It was obvious that the intention was to keep him away from Caxamalca for the next few days. But he could not refuse to carry out orders. So he rode out, at the head of his men, full of sad forebodings.

## XVIII

I now want to relate how the death sentence came to be pronounced upon the Inca.

At the ninth hour of morning, the General called Don Almagro, Don Riquelme, Andrea della Torre, and Alonso de Molino to a conference in the Inca's house. The Inca sat silent in the vestibule, surrounded by his nobles and women, with the guards a little further off.

At the tenth hour, Alonso de Molino appeared in the vestibule, and called him into the house. The same people who had considered whether any indictment could be brought against him at all, were now assembled as his judges. A certain Anton de

Carrion, a runaway student, was appointed Counsel for the Defence.

The chief witness for the Prosecution was Felipillo, whose evidence was recorded, without any attempt being made to discover whether it was true. The General told him to swear on the crucifix, and he swore.

Atahualpa stood before the tribunal like a bronze statue, and scorned to justify himself. The evidence of the Peruvians, falsely interpreted by Felipillo, seemed to confirm what the judges wanted confirmed. Atahualpa was found guilty, and the sentence was that he should be burnt alive that same evening in the great Square of Caxamalca.

## XIX

I have never really understood what suspicious haste drove the General to act. Above all, he was afraid of Hernando de Soto's return. Why, I do not know.

De Soto was a strong and honest character. He also belonged to an influential and powerful family. But what had Francesco Pizarro to fear save failure and death ?

My insignificant self gave him no cause to consider my views, though these must have been known to him ; I did not flatter him like his sycophants, and did not pretend to admire every action of his. I was cut out by my temperament to be a silent spectator ; I am a stutterer—I am that inwardly, too. At that time I had even fewer words than now, and what I saw and felt had first to run through many channels before it entered my consciousness and the light of my heart.

It was advisable to obtain the express approval of Pater Valverde for the action to be taken against the Inca. A record of the sentence was submitted to the monk, for his signature. I was present when he read it. His glance flew uncertainly over the pages, he put his name to the document, at the side of the three crosses that the General had placed there as his signature, and said with sinister calm : " Let him die."

Thirty years have passed since that day, and people may think that the picture has grown dim. It has not. On the contrary, every figure, and every colour ■ still as vivid, every word is as clear in my memory. What does ■ matter, thirty years ? And

when three hundred and three thousand years will have heaped their dust and mould upon it, the memory of mankind will be as unyielding as mine. Of that I am convinced in my solitude.

## XX

Atahualpa left the hall, but soon after he sent a request to the General to postpone the execution till the next morning, because he wanted to die in face of the sun. Don Almagro and several others objected, but the General granted the Prince's request. At the same time he took all precautions against an attack by the Peruvians, who might at the last moment attempt to rescue their King. There had been a suspicious movement observed during the last few days. On the highways and in the valleys. The guards were therefore strengthened, and the cannon loaded.

There were several other men in the camp besides me who were against putting the Inca to death, and did not keep quiet as I did. They rejected the evidence against him as utterly unreliable and denied the competence of such a court to try a Prince in his own State. But their arguments only infuriated the majority, and again there was brawling, again the Square and the surrounding streets rang with the noise of shouting and the clash of arms.

The Inca asked me what this noise meant. I had not the courage to tell him the truth. He was crouching in the middle of the room, with chains on his feet. Since he was sentenced it had been deemed necessary to shackle him in this shameful fashion. Round him, like shadows, sat his faithful followers. He was visibly disturbed, and at times he raised his head, as if looking for something. Late in the afternoon, a messenger arrived, whispered something, flung himself on the ground, and lay motionless. An hour later a second arrived, and in another hour a third. Their mission must have been of the utmost importance to the Inca, for each time the whispered message came, his face cleared and the disquiet left him.

He was waiting for his ancestors. That was also the explanation of the movement that we had observed for some days among the Peruvians. Anticipating death, with a clear premonition of his fate, Atahualpa had several days previously sent to the Great Temple of the Sun at Cuzco, that his dead ancestors should come to him, and partake of the death-meal, as every Inca did when he

felt his end approaching. It was for that the roads were being cleared, it was for their reception that the people were preparing out in the countryside.

## XXI

At the sixth hour, Atahualpa expressed the desire to speak to the General.

Pizarro came, followed by his brother Pedro and the sinister Don Almagro.

For a time, Atahualpa stared in front of him ; suddenly he stood up and cried : " What have I done, what have my children done, that this should be my fate, and at your hands ? Have you forgotten how my people treated you trustfully and with kindness ? And I, did I not show you sufficient friendship ? "

The General was silent.

And now it came about that Atahualpa, the proudest of the proud, clasped his hands and prayed for his life. In a very low voice, his lips a little protruding, his head a little bowed, with eyes that were dulled. I no longer recall the words. I can only see him standing in front of me, unforgettable. Many have said that Francesco Pizarro was so moved that he wept. I myself, said his brother Pedro in writing, saw the General weep.

I did not see it. And the Inca's words found no response in him. If a man is moved and weeps, he must be aware of his error. I did not see anything like that.

When Atahualpa realised that he could not shake the General's resolve, he was filled with shame at the way he had degraded himself. He folded his arms across his breast and stood waiting, in deep thought.

## XXII

After some time had passed in this way, Atahualpa suddenly turned to me, and said in his broken Spanish that he had heard of the wonderful art of writing that we understood, and that he would like to see a specimen.

I asked him what he wanted me to do, and he said that I should write a word on his thumb-nail and then my comrades should read it and tell him what it was, so softly that he alone could hear what word I had written. If they would all say the same word he would no longer doubt that we possessed this art.

I did not immediately know how to carry out his wish, for which the occasion and the hour seemed strangely chosen. But my indetermination did not last long.

I unfastened a clasp from my robe and scratched on the Inca's thumb-nail, with some effort, indeed, but quite legibly, the word *crux*. Then I called up the knights. They obeyed, some grumbling, some laughing, and each as he read the word, whispered softly into Atahualpa's ear : *crux*. He was astounded, and since all without hesitation repeated the same word he was convinced of the mysterious power of writing.

The General was the only one who had not moved from his place. Francesco Pizarro could neither write nor read. Though this was known to many of us, yet it rankled in his mind that he had been shown up in front of his officers, and, above all, in front of the Inca, and he stared grimly straight ahead. Atahualpa grasped the connection, and endeavoured with admirable tact to rectify the error, saying with a smile : "Of course, you knew what was there before it was written. *Crux* is the word. You, a god among your people, did not need to see it with your eyes."

"I am not a god. What does a heathen like you know of God !" Pizarro growled contemptuously, for he did not believe that the Inca's words were sincere.

"I know little of your God. But I know a great deal of mine," was the soft answer. "Your God cannot be seen. Mine travels across the heavens and greets his children every day."

Shaking his head, and with a tone almost of pity, the General replied : "There is only one God, you heathen, and it would be as well for you if you directed your prayers to him."

"How can you speak with such certainty, and say that your God is the real and the only God ?" the Inca enquired with regal calm. "And how shall I believe in Him if He permits you, who constantly speak of His Love and Mercy, to murder innocent people ?"

The General said nothing and turned away.

### XXIII

It was an hour before midnight when the Knight Garcia de Jerez entered my room and reported that something unusual was going on in the hall below, and that we must be on our guard. He did not know exactly why he was warning me ; it was just a

sense of fear, of disquiet. For when I questioned him, he could only say that the Inca was sitting all by himself at a long table, immobile at the centre of the table, at which there were twenty-four vacant seats.

I had not been feeling well that day and had gone early to bed. I got up, dressed quickly and went out.

In the Square there were pitch-pans burning, by whose sombre light a number of our men were building up the *auto-da-fé*. The great hall was lighted by torches, and I saw the Inca, as Garcia had described, seated at the centre of a table that had been put up there, absolutely immobile, and on each side of him, right and left, twelve golden plates. Behind each of these vacant places, and also behind the Inca stood a servant, holding a dish filled with food, twenty-five in all, absolutely motionless, and behind the servants, just as rigid, stood Atahualpa's noblemen and young women.

It was a sight for which I was not<sup>r</sup> prepared. One reads sometimes in fairy tales of whole gatherings of people being turned to stone by the evil spell of a magician ; that is what came to my mind when I saw this scene. The hour and the place added to the weirdness of it. Garcia and I stared at each other in bewilderment.

Meanwhile Cristoval de Peralta, who was in command of the guards in the city, and had also observed the strange behaviour of the captive Prince, had gone to report to the General. Pizarro had invited some friends to supper, and Cristoval found them at wine and boisterously happy. His tale was received with coarse jests. But then the General, whose watchfulness never slumbered, said that they must go across and see what relation there was to the play-acting that had just been described. He dismissed the company, and he was accompanied by both his brothers, Don Almagro, Don Riquelme, della Torre, Alonso de Molina, and Cristoval de Peralta. From the other side of the Square came simultaneously, slowly, reading his breviary, Pater Valverde, who, while the following ensued, stood like a silent, admonishing watchman between the *auto-da-fé* and the staircase of the pillared hall.

#### XXIV

The knights, whom Garcia and I had joined, were crowded together along one side of the hall, and I believe that even the

most valorous were struck with awe when they beheld the Peruvians, completely turned to stone.

Suddenly Atahualpa lifted his eyelids and for the first time seemed aware of us. His glance was like a scorching ray ; I had to turn my eyes away, and they fell on the reddish, fleshy ears of the General, who was close beside me. Atahualpa stood up, and in his equanimity and his proud dignity, he was indescribably handsome to look upon ; the red flare of the torches quivered on his bronzed countenance, and the scarlet robe that enveloped his slim figure gave him the appearance of something glowing.

"Tell me, you men, how have you come here ?" he began, softly and meditatively. "What land is it in which you have your home ? Tell me, how was it created, and how do you manage to live there without sun ?"

"Why without sun ?" asked Andrea della Torre in surprise. "Do you think we live in eternal darkness ?"

"So I must think, since you have declared war upon the sun," Atahualpa answered.

"You and the sun, I suppose you are one !" cried Don Almagro scoffingly.

"For many thousands of years," nodded the Inca. "My ancestors and I. Since the corn fruit grows in this land."

This was followed by a silence, in which we heard Pater Valverde praying outside.

"My ancestors will come," said Atahualpa mysteriously, "those who have not crumbled into dust will come and greet me."

We stared at him in amazement.

"But you are not answering me," he resumed, looking round, "why are you silent to my question ? Does this same sun shine in your land ? You must be mistaken. It must be another. Is it not enraged when you destroy the gems that your artificers have fashioned ? Does it not plunge you in darkness when you approach the sanctified women ? What laws have you, what customs ? Are there any among you whom you dare not touch ? Have you anything before which your hand shrinks back without laying hold of it ?"

He flung out both arms, with the hands flat, like scales into which he wanted to receive the answer. But no answer came. There was such breathless silence, that it was almost ghostly.

"I wanted to find out what makes you so strong," he went on

meditatively, with his head sunk, "and I think I know now. It must be the gold. Gold gives you courage to grasp all things, and make them your own. And in gaining these things you destroy the form of them. The gold transforms your soul, the gold ■ your god, your redeemer, as you call it, and the one who possesses a bit of it, he thinks he owns the sun, because he knows no other sun. I understand it now, thoroughly, and I pity you sunless creatures."

The General turned round angrily. Don Almagro raised his arm menacingly, the knights murmured involuntarily. Outside Pater Valverde ordered the soldiers to light the auto-da-fé. And then something happened that will never vanish from my memory, something gruesome, ghostly.

## XXV

The first dull red appeared in the eastern sky when we saw a long procession of Peruvians coming along the road into Caxamalca, and approaching the great Square. In the midst of the procession and high above it we saw twenty-four motionless figures on as many stools, which we immediately perceived were of gold like the Inca's throne, and were carried by eight warriors on their shoulders, like the Inca's throne. And each of these figures was wrapped in the most costly robes, and they were twelve men and twelve women, all dead.

They came from their burial-places, where they had rested, some for a generation, the others longer, for centuries, Atahualpa's ancestors.

The men wore the Borla and the coraqueque feathers, the women wore star-embroidered white veils, that enveloped them down to the hips.

When the sombre and almost soundless procession stopped close to the stairs of the entrance-hall, the bearers of the dead stepped out, strode with the thrones into the hall, up to the table, and placed them down at the places that had been prepared, the men to the right of the Inca, the women to the left.

And at the top of the table they erected a huge golden sun, that in the glow of the burning torches and pitch-pans and the flames of the immense auto-da-fé that had already been set fire to, shone out bewilderingly.

Atahualpa now began to partake of the food, but only make-believe, and for each mummy some food was put on the golden plate in front of it, also make-believe. In their royal robes, their heads a little sunk, the hair raven-black or silver-white, according to the age at which they had died, these dead seemed alive, and this impression was intensified by the glaring light of the various fires, and soon also by the rising dawn.

At first the faces of my comrades betrayed horror and awe, but the sight of the golden thrones and the golden robes, the jewels and bracelets, and, above all, the golden sun, roused their greed anew, and drove them into a fever of desire, for such a collection of treasures was beyond anything they had imagined, and it robbed them of their reason. The guards came rushing up, the soldiers came rushing up, greed and dread in their eyes, lust and fear; I myself still felt it flare up—unreal, tormenting desire; then it burst in me, this monstrous doubling, lust and horror, greed and fear, sight of the gold and sight of the death of consciousness.

I still saw how part of the soldiery flung themselves on the gold thrones, and were driven back by the knights; I still saw how the Inca made obeisance before his ancestors, and the nobles did likewise, and how, in the gleam of the first ray of the sun, after an anguished-astonished glance at the *mêlée*, he strode with a cheerful smile to the place of execution; I still heard the gloomy admonitions of the monk, and the mumbled credos of the knights who had gathered round the pyre, and then there descended on me a merciful darkness that left my mind again only after many days.

## XXVI

But it still took a long time before I arrived at contemplation and the humble consideration of human affairs. I do not feel tempted to describe what else of sorrow and upheaval passed before my eyes, and in what evil deeds I still shared, with my spirit in revolt against it.

To be in darkness and long for the light is a state of soul that tortures it, but also brings it out at a gush. Between the glimmering of the truth and knowledge there is a pointer, between indolence and yearning a call.

When once I wandered through the ruins of a charred town,

and looked into the eyes of brother-men, a voice commanded me to be silent and to wait.

When I came another time in the Cordillera mountains upon a group of dying children, whom hunger and fear had driven out of the desolated villages into the waste of Pajoral, I wept because of what man is and declined to be.

I saw death in every form that it assumes on earth ; I saw friends pass, and the leaders fall, and the nations end, and the mutability of all happiness, and the deceit of all hopes, and tasted the bitter lees in every drink, and the secret poison in every food, and suffered in the dissension between communities and the depravity of even the enlightened, and the cruel, indifferent rolling of time over this pain-laden earth, and recognised the nothingness of all possession and the eternity of all being, and I was filled with yearning for a better star into which the glorious sun has put a purer glow and a nobler soul.

This, on which I live, is perhaps spurned by God.

## ARTHUR ARONYMUS

### *My Father's Story*

By ELSE LASKER-SCHUELER

*Translated by MARY FOWLER*

Else Lasker-Schueler, born 1876, in Elberfeld, Germany. The most important woman writer in Germany to-day. A visionary, an eccentric, and the authoress of some remarkable ecstastic poetry. She has a volume of "Hebrew Ballads" among her published poems, and several Jewish stories, including "The Wonder Rabbi of Barcelona." Her collected works have been published in many volumes. She was awarded the 1932 Kleist Prize for the best work in German literature during the year.

She is the enthusiast in German literature. Much of her work is fantasy, fantastic, playful, almost fairy-tale. "Arthur Aronymus" which she has herself selected for this anthology, is a more realistic work, drawn from the memories of her childhood. The book has been dramatised and the play has been produced in Berlin by the famous producer, Professor Leopold Jessner, for many years Director and Producer of the Prussian State Theatres, till he was dismissed by the Hitler Government for being a Jew. It was played by an all-Jewish cast, in an attempt to give employment to Jewish actors and actresses who are refused engagements now in the German State Theatres.

WHEN the Christmas trees were lit up behind the windows of the Westphalian houses, my father's father, that is, my grandfather, told his twenty-three children the fearful tragedy of his youth, which had occurred on the Holy Evening of Christendom. My grandfather's older children grimly confirmed in an avenging chorus of sing-song the misdeeds committed against their Chosen People. Only my little father now and again impatiently scraped the nails of his heavy boy's boots on the floor or on the walnut legs of the large table, so that while the hearts of his twenty-two brothers and sisters almost stopped with fright, his twenty-third however leaped for joy almost in the face of his watching father. He was afraid of mice, even if he did not own up to it. He

bought from the poor Croatian boys the most expensive mouse-traps, testing the springs carefully in front and behind. But to-day he overcame his antipathy to "these importunate rodents." Most annoyed of all was Arthur Aronymus, the little "enfant terrible," at the way in which the prosy father span out the lengthy tale of horror. He had long ago heard his two friends whistling outside the garden fence.

The fir trees were lighted up like to day behind the window-panes of the spiritual capital of Westphalia, when the bloody pogrom was enacted. Innocently-spilt Jewish blood wailed across the frontiers of the homeland, darkly over the Rhine and beat against Jewish hearts in other kingdoms; in uncanny echo over the continents of the world. On the decorated branches of the tall fir trees in the town hall and the schools they had hung little Jewish children like bonbons. Tender hands and blood-spattered little feet lay about, rotting dead leaves in the streets of the ghettos, where the Jews of those days were permitted to dwell. Bodies stripped, so that they could be more easily maltreated, dripped blood, impaled from shattered window-panes. Admission to the inner part of the city without a special permit was strictly forbidden to the majority of the Jewish population. Several families, among them my grandfather's, were allowed by the authorities to move freely among the inhabitants of other creeds.

My little father clapped his hands, for the story of bloodshed had last year already begun to interest him at this point. He had been so fond of Grandpa Rabbinu, his dear mother's father, and he had also been his favourite grandchild. How often had the high priest after the midday meal secretly slipped across the road to the sweet shop with his droll grandchild. Aye, he had often winked at him knowingly, during the simple meal, this big, awe-inspiring Jew who was honoured by the whole town, Jew and Christian alike; friend of Bishop Lavater of Westphalia. Every evening, after the two princes of the Church had partaken of their simple suppers, they met in a small guest-room in the Golden Halfmoon. It neither waxed nor waned, exactly like the unchanging bond of friendship which linked the two high priests. They anointed the hours before bedtime with God-pleasing oil, searched for heavenly gold in holy conversation; two allied seekers after God. For, at bottom, they both believed in the one

only invisible Lord, the Eternal, the King of the universe. And even if malicious neighbours tried to convince my white-haired great-grandfather, my little father's grandfather, after the Bishop had been long dead, that his unswerving friend the Bishop had known of the hellish plan of the Jewish massacre, without being able to hinder it, etc., my indignant little father, quite beside himself because of the glint in the eyes of the Rabbinu used to pummel the wicked people with his tiny but powerful fists. All the childhood pictures of Grandpa Rabbinu might have been himself, even his mother asserted that they were so alike that one couldn't tell the difference. Nature had moulded him in grandfather's image and he was very proud of it. Six years old was my father, entering his seventh. He was the one whom his mother preferred to take with her when she visited the beloved grandfather, whose beard nearly reached down to the small Persian carpet which he had brought back in his youth from a religious journey through the libraries of the East. The fringes of this valuable carpet were tended daily. Sometimes an evening breeze lifted them like the fingers of many pious hands. Grandfather wore a turban on his venerable head, black on weekdays and white silk on the Sabbath. And he was a little flattered, when pilgrims came from exotic lands and said that he looked like the powerful Sultan of the Bosphorus. But he stopped them when they bent down to kiss his garment.

The fathers of my great-grandparents, my little father's parents' parents lived next door to each other in the Catholic capital of Westphalia. Their children were solemnly betrothed in childhood, going on with their games after the betrothal ceremony. They climbed apple and pear trees with the neighbours' children. When they afterwards married, so grandmother related, it was just as ■ she had married her brother. The fact is she preferred Edmond, the older brother. An infuriated bull, he jumped on the morning of her wedding, snorting, over the fence in Gaesecke. Moritz, the happy bridegroom, had bought a piece of land there, which he cultivated with the assistance of industrious peasants. My grandmother, my father's mother, was to be a farmer's wife ! But Edmond had fair, curly hair and ardent yellow eyes ; the black-eyed daughters of the Jewish family had all lost their hearts to him. Moritz, on the other hand, my grandfather, was an upright man, with almost too severe an expression, and his cool

glances often lighted on his nearest like sinister daggers. He brooked no contradiction, and that was the only objection which my great-grandfather, my grandmother's gentle father, had against him. For thoughts and words expand when they play freely, unfettered, and pine without contradiction. But the betrothed young man did not understand the wisdom of his priestly father-in-law. Like the majority of his sons, Arthur Aronymus' brothers. None of them had inherited the Rabbinu's godly wisdom ; but his grandfather compared his little Arthur's untamed, undeveloped temperament with the smiling berry on its stem. His father, on the other hand, looked upon him like a kind of beaten black sheep, which gave the big sheep dog difficulties now and again.

This time his father contented himself by responding to the incorrigible little Aronymus' vivaciousness with a look of reproof in his stern eyes. For his brothers and sisters, too, longed for the end of the gloomy ballad, to be sure with more feigned patience, "and spit," mused Arthur, "and you'll get hit !"

Dora, his beaming, older sister, had long ago got into touch with him in their language of signs, which only they two could interpret. But Regina, who was crocheting, sat bolt upright, dutifully, just as she had sat down at the big table, and corroborated each time with a nod of her head, what her father said, Elischen had from the beginning of the tragedy been turning the pages of Goethe's *Hermann and Dorothea*, accompanied by the rhythm of the village church bell. Lenchen, Arthur's favourite small sister, sat on the lap of the eldest daughter, beautiful Fanny. She was tired and hung her head, and only the twins, both called Meta, because they could not be kept apart, had long since fled to their mother, one Meta on her right, one Meta on her left. At grandfather's side sat dear, suffering Alex in an invalid chair, and short-sighted Max, the apple of his father's eye, had as always, placed himself next to father ; he wore a child's lorgnette tied round his neck, but he always lost it playing in the garden, drawing animals in the sand. Menahem was the name of the eldest. After him came Simeon. His brothers and sisters called him "Miser"—even his father thought he was too material. But also the dozing off every evening of his pathetic Julius went against his heart.

The children made fun when he opened his mouth wide like

what they imagined was the mouth of a great Mogul. A roast goose could without effort have flown into it. But Berthold was like his uncle Edmond, he had the same curly, golden hair and big light eyes, and his Christian schoolfellows spared him. Fanny's dancing partner suddenly came into the room. Even if it was not a pogrom, he had been the victim of a private Jewish agitation a year or so ago. Since then he looked out of one real black eye and one artificial light-blue eye ; the chemist had sold out all the dark eyes. And since then, when he drank beer in the inn, he had, half-face, often been taken for a Christian, though his nose, in spite of its considerable length, had suffered no damage. Fanny passed him on to Dora, the sympathetic sister. She had already given him almost all her knick-knacks, that really meant nothing to a man. She had danced far too much with him at Paderstein's ball. He was the rage. Elischen thought, though, that he was far too learned for Dora and for the unsophisticated, jolly girls of Gaeesecke. Once, by intensive humming and hawing, she had lured him to the jasmine arbour at the end of her garden, and in the twilight, she had captured him for herself by means of experienced tactics. Regina, on the other hand, had little luck with men. Besides, she had red hands. The good-looking chemist had ordered her a bran pack and she dipped her housewifely fingers into the slimy, bleaching mass every night before she went to bed. She was really the woman of the house. She found something to do everywhere. Sometimes she could not find her apron ; quivering and grumbling, she would rush into the garden, so that the coloured and white peacocks flew up. And the apron was again hanging on the plum tree.

Like a ghost she would sometimes creep up the gravel walk. Woe to the rascal if she caught him then ! Regina collected the honey in little earthenware pots, and the beekeeper knew well that " every bee she had numbered, marked somewhere on its body." And he was far more afraid of the sting of the bustling Regina, his employer's daughter, than of sweet-humming Regina, the queen-bee. Little Lenchen, Arthur's favourite sister, was loved by everyone in the house and garden, and by the people in the whole village ; no one would do anything to hurt her. She really was still sitting with her littlest brothers and sisters in the nest. Only her brother pulled her out frequently, and then they marched hand in hand past the bright beds of immortelles in the gardens

of the simple Westphalian houses to the neighbouring village ; carrying greetings from their mother. " Well, what is your mother doing ? " asked the wife of the medical officer, Frau Gruenebaum. " Making coffee when there are visitors coming," replied my little father. All Westphalia soon knew about the cheeky boy's ready answer ; and even grandfather could not restrain a smile, when he reprimanded his son Arthur Aronymus for letting his tongue run away with him.

The young village priest and all his teachers put together did not inspire him with so much fear as his stern father. He could not help it that he was so " stupid," that he was bottom of the class, though he was always doing well in gymnastics and singing. " He is not supposed to be good at everything," his generous mother defended him when he again failed to pass up. And she took her " poor " boy instantly for a visit to her parents' home in Paderborn. Grandfather Rabbinu was in his grave already for a year, but it was for that very reason that she yearned to go home to do her pious father's wish as written down in his will : One year after his death to transfer his huge folios bound in pigskin to the town library. Even Arthur's father finally agreed to that. The mother had only a vague memory of that Christmas Eve and of the pogrom, with which her husband's story dealt. All the newspapers had carried the bloody news round the world. Some few Christians gave the Hebrews well-intentioned advice to take up less industrial occupations, without stopping to think of the paragraphs which forbid Jews to enter the Christian educational establishments. And there were plenty of priests starving among the Jewish race. From Spain they had almost all been already expelled with their communities or forced to become Christian converts. Grandfather Rabbinu prayed so often in the temple for the Marranos, Jews who had been poured into strange jugs, the handle broken off, so that it was no longer easy to hold them. The thousand-year-old yearning that one day the stone would split—it would even after centuries, Arthur Aronymus' venerable grandfather Rabbinu prophesied.

Weeping Spanish Jews came so often to his grandfather seeking consolation. In the narrow streets of the ghetto they grouped themselves with the native Jewish population to join with them in economic, and, above all, religious matters. There was material enough, ay, to excess, bloodstained material, alas;

to examine it, to cut it down, finally to find the redeeming formula, that was the wish of all the oppressed. Many of them wore crape on their arms, those hit particularly hard stumbled along in sack-cloth through the corners of the Jewish quarter to the familiar synagogue. Their eyes were burnt out, wept grey ashes. These memories rose to the mind of Arthur's mother, and she sobbed bitterly, leading her small son by the hand from the station to the dead grandfather's house. There the little red-glass hanging-lamp still burned—a whole year long for his soul. And Arthur's mother, indicating her father's faithful servant, explained to her child that he was watching to see that grandfather's soul was not extinguished.

The next morning the sun shone quite brightly. My grandmother and my little father took the road to the cemetery. Mother might stop crying, thought Aronymus, and without any real cause took a couple of leaps, though he had promised his mother to be really good in the sacred Garden, to speak softly, and above all to walk quietly at her side. Suddenly a cuckoo called. Arthur Aronymus counted very quietly, Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo! "Seven times." And then he said in Westphalian dialect, speaking with the accent of the peasants: "Just as old as I am would be grandfather. A fine age, eh, Mother?" She could not scold him, she saw the dear Rabbinu rejoice in his grave, his holy soul smiling from the blue sky, at her little Arthur Aronymus, his spoilt grandchild. And eventually the youngster realised why his mother had pocketed some little pebbles as well as some a little bigger; for she lifted him up and he had to arrange them, on the top edge of the wide memorial, like a mason, in a straight line up to the sky. It was his first serious structure. He observed two hands folded in prayer chiselled between the shield of David on the pious stones. Arthur Aronymus preferred not to ask his mother about the inscription, afraid lest she start crying again. Hardly anyone at the big oak table noticed the deep emotion that lay on my grandmother's brow, except the sympathetic Dora, with her round brown eyes. All at once Arthur Aronymus fell on his mother's neck, gave her a resounding kiss on the mouth, a thundering Amen, an unexpectedly happy conclusion of the drama, which surprised even his father, and he let it pass, as I have already said, by lifting his dictatorial eyebrows.

The boy had indeed had no unpleasant experiences himself so far with Christians ; on the contrary, he could not stand the industrious Ernst Paderstein in his class, who always sat in the first place ; the rivers in geography all flowed out of his open mouth. He was already as puffed up as his father under his beard. He preferred Kaspar Setzdich and Willi Himmel, though they had once shouted at him : " Jew ! Jew ! Jew ! Hep ! Hep ! " because they had found a currant bun in his satchel and he wouldn't give them any of it. He had punched them all the harder for that ! And he tried often since then by using the same words to provoke his schoolmates in the Jewish school and the children in the Jewish street. The people of Gaeckeck muttered that Arthur Aronymus, the schoolboy, was a Christian child, perhaps exchanged by a wet nurse. The gossips discussed it over their coffee cups and the fathers talked it over in the inn. They should have seen it in the healthy, unruly boy long ago ! Many of them patted him in sympathy in passing and found it amusing when he stuck his tongue out at them for it. The grocer gave him big toffees that he was very fond of out of the glass jar. One day the jolly parish priest with whom all his sisters were in love, spoke to him on his way to school. He seemed amused at Aronymus' fresh answer. He laid his slender, well-kept hand on the boy's freshly-combed parting. Fräulein Paderstein just happened to pass, the scraggy senior of the Paderstein family, the unmarried sister of the big manufacturer, Alfred Paderstein, and she told Herr Schueler, in her sharp-tongued way, about the curious honour paid to his son Arthur. Old father Schueler had really been promised to her as her heaven-sent husband. Though the shrivelled old maid had told him the news spitefully, it flattered him and occupied his thoughts all day. And he began to give his son, whom he had hitherto somewhat neglected, lessons in agriculture. To Arthur it was all the same whether the big tree on which the acorns grew, from which he and Lenchen made little carts to sell, was called oak or fir, or the big trunk opposite, on which green hedgehogs hung in autumn, with which he and his sister played menageries, was a chestnut or a lime ; the only thing that mattered was that he could climb them both. And only the slightest opening occurred, and his father interrupted the lesson, his Arthur Aronymus ran off. He was far more interested in building towns with his new big box of bricks, and

mostly observation towers like the one near Ervitte. Lenchen was to live up there in the clouds with him. "Then we'll send down rain," he promised his sister. And he practised with his bricks, which Fanny had bought him as a reward for keeping a look out by her window while her admirer from Münster was courting her. Woovers often came to see the regal Fanny; the inspector at the tiny village railway station spotted them at once by their patent-leather shoes, check trousers and fashionable ties. Herr Emil wore a camelia in his buttonhole. But his sister's face went as red as the last cherry on the tree—Arthur happened to be there when they said good-bye. He stammered and his teeth kept chattering. Dora came up and took pity on him, and brought him a glass of Tokay. One could die of laughing to see how he staggered out of the front door with Elischen holding him up. And this man, too, she said, was too clever for her superficial sister Fanny. Arthur, Kaspar, and Willi listened to all the learned nonsense that the swain displayed not to disillusion the well-read sister. In the evening, over his milk pudding, Arthur Aronymus decided that later on he would marry his sister Lenchen so that she should not fall into the hands of a learned man; and on her birthday he gave her a china doll bought with the pfennigs he had saved, and was sorry that it had been born naked. A whole row of them stood exposed for sale in the little grocery-shop window, peering between little straw baskets and aniseed balls. On Christmas Eve a woman came to my grandfather's house wearing a large, brand-new apron. She brought a letter from the priest, containing a request. My little beaming father was to come to the presentation of gifts in his house. Every word of the kindly message was examined and weighed by the Paderstein family. They came to the conclusion to accept the kind young priest's invitation, not to insult him with a refusal, so that the Catholic world should be given no cause for annoyance, which might perhaps conjure up a pogrom. On Christmas Eve, little Arthur Aronymus would have run off as he was in his muddy boots to the priest's house, his mind full of the presents that awaited him there. His mother, full of alarm, just managed to catch him in the hall of the big farmhouse by the lapel of his overall, washed him herself, pulled on his brown-striped velvet trousers and carefully put two large, clean handkerchiefs in his pockets; she also placed a gleaming white collar round his

impatient little neck, tying the ends together with a pink rosette, which one of his sisters had bought from a hawker. "But I'm a boy, mother!" He also had to clean his teeth<sup>2</sup> for the second time!" that day, and afterwards he gargled angrily with the peppermint-pasty water, so that quiet little Lenchen turned a somersault on the carpet for joy. She was the only one who would get a share of the sweets he would obtain. He couldn't understand, it just occurred to him, why, because they were Jews, they couldn't keep Christmas in their own house. He slid down the banisters in his Sunday suit as swiftly as on a switchback.

Punctually at five o'clock he stood outside the yellow house. The priest was looking out of the window, so he didn't have to pull the bell. As he entered the shimmering room, with the priest holding his hand, he saw his two small nieces kneeling in the niche before the Lord Jesus on the Cross. There were flowers nearby on a shelf and a big lighted candle in front of it. Arthur still caught the concluding words of the Paternoster; he felt uneasy, but he need not look any more. The jolly priest admired his good breeding, as the wild youth, tamed, looked at the illuminated fir tree in the study from a fitting distance. They had chocolate in large cups and sweet rusks. Dear Father Bernard drank out of the largest cup. There was something written on it. Narzissa sat next to him. She wore a blue ribbon in her hair and had blue earrings in her ears. And Ursula slipped quite near to him, to Aronymus, to see which of them would empty their cups first. Then Bernard led the children to the table where the presents were laid out. There were two dolls, a furnished doll's house, and a kitchen, and on the white-scrubbed floor a rocking-horse for "him"<sup>3</sup>! He would have loved best of all to embrace Uncle Bernard, as the little nieces called him, fall on his neck. But the two girls, accompanied by the clergyman, began to sing "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht, alles schlaeft, einsam wacht." He felt too much abashed even to hum it with them, but by the time that song was over he had overcome his shyness and needed no urging. He sang "O, Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum! O, o, o, Tannenbaum! Wie schoen sind deine Blaetter." He sang it much better than Kaspar Setzdich or Willi Himmel; where those stood they squeaked Christmas carols into people's ears. And he was allowed to join

the little nieces in plucking gilded apples and nuts and tempting morsels from the Christmas tree. Suddenly little Ursula bent down a branch, thinking that her uncle wouldn't notice, to pilfer the wonderful red-glass ball ; she got a smack and the priest reproved her " You don't want to be like a little Jewish girl, do you ? "

This devil who slipped from his chaste mouth tormented the priest all the rest of his life. He could not even account to his Saviour how the poisonous shell of a long-inherited and waned spring dared so consciously slip on to the shore of his lips. He loved this boy, little Arthur Aronymus, from the bottom of his heart, and he had to admit that he preferred him to many of the flock entrusted to him in the parish, though till recently he had in his theological career conscientiously avoided having any preferences.

How deeply he must have hurt the jubilant heart of the youngster was evident in his perplexed, round, boyish face. He wanted to run straight home to his mother ! At last he swung himself with determination into the saddle of the wooden steed, gave it the spurs and galloped away sulkily, without turning round again. The priest, taken aback, took down from among the mass of silver decorations on the tree the wax angel in a starry dress " for Lenchen," Arthur's little sister. With this, Arthur returned to his parental home, knowing why his father and mother did not keep Christmas, and why he and his brothers and sisters got no presents from them ; and why the Padersteins, too, did not buy a tree in the market-place by the church, where fir branches and all kinds of trampled tree decorations still lay about. The thoughts behind his childish forehead, which usually went their own sweet way, suddenly wore pitch black solemn coats, and were able to drag along only with great effort, like the poor pedlar, who came from Galicia, with curls on both sides under his flat hat. Yes, he had suddenly become goodly in his eyes. How was that ? Till now he had always laughed at him, together with Kaspar and Willi. And now he dissembled and lied for the first time in his life, as he laughingly embraced his mother, while in his heart were bitter tears. That night he dreamed of the town of Paderborn, where his Grandfather Rabbinu had lived. To him he confessed in his dream. They walked together through the old streets of the cathedral town,

sometimes bent, sometimes making themselves quite thin; pushed, as his hands did when building up his painted bricks, through the narrow rows of houses in the Westphalian Residency. Frontages without inner parts grew up everywhere out of the ground, one after the other, and when grandfather wanted to go with him through one of the house doors, they fell, flop ! into a large hole. Besides, the long noses that the urchins made at them, and all the little pointed towers that threatened to fall on their heads ! When he woke, his sisters were sitting in a circle round his bed. He had to tell them about Christmas Eve at the " lovely " priest's ! Fanny and Dora had not been able to wait, not even Regina and the learned Elischen. To prevent any quarrelling among the sisters, the mother had sent the gardener to the priest, with a big bouquet of roses tied up with paper bows, " from the Schueler family."

Shortly after the festival, Fanny, her parents' eldest daughter, Arthur Aronymus' eldest sister, became engaged. And her friends admired the tasteful engagement ring with the red garnet in the middle. Regina got a mink collar from her parents as compensation; Elischen a rosewood bookcase, and Dora a little beaded cape. Poor Dora, she could no longer sit still on a chair, she got St. Vitus' dance. The doctor indeed consoled the parents; it often happened at " that age "; and he prescribed Valerian drops for her, twenty-five three times a day in a glass of water, and he also ordered her to take a soothing tea of lime flowers, fennel and camomile. Dora had become so comical; she was goggle-eyed and prayed half the night. She was always starting to pray all over again, thinking that she had forgotten to name one or other of her brothers or sisters. She also got " idées fixes," and once she snapped up Arthur Aronymus, thinking he was one of the elder brothers. Always she bowed her swaying figure once, twice, three times before she picked a daisy or a buttercup off the lawn. Elischen won Dora's confidence. She confessed to her that if she did not bow three times before she plucked a flower " Alex " would die. Elischen explained to her like a doctor the crazy superstition of her mad behaviour, and, at long last, exorcised the devil from her with a box on the ear. Exorcising devils was a daily occurrence in Paderborn. Witches were burnt or walled up. And a sufferer from St. Vitus' dance was a devil-possessed creature. Evil spirits were particularly

fond of taking up their abode in virgin Jewesses. So that Dora was not allowed to show herself any more, even in her own garden ! For the inhabitants of Gaecke were constantly passing. Far too many had already noticed her dancing about. They seriously questioned the farm servants, down to the dairymaid and the cowherd, if ■ were true that Dora really ate " glass " and swallowed " fire." And in the end they were afraid that the poor, kindhearted girl had the evil eye. It came too late to the ears of the frightened parents that their daughter had been denounced, and by wicked, jealous people ; by those very people in Gaecke who had been allowed to gather the windfalls from the garden in the autumn. The Christians of Gaecke were already looking forward to the Christmas sensation, " Dora at the stake." A wit had even composed a song about it. They had till now seen only one single witch burnt, not far from their home. And many of the village inhabitants were looking forward anxiously to Christmas this year. But in the farmhouse they had not yet reached any decision how to avert the impending catastrophe in their family ; The father, the mother, the Padersteins, and the relatives, who had been notified, were all unable to think of anything. They sat together often far into the night, in the heavily-curtained sitting-room, when the young priest, unasked, came for the first time into my grandparents' big house. Like a young Conrad, regal, blue-eyed, he strode, clad in spiritual armour, up the high front-door steps of the old farmhouse. Arthur had seen him coming from a jagged stone of the roof arabesques, and listened at the keyhole of the freshly-painted double door, which linked the drawing-room with a little side room. Old Mother Paderstein sat next to his mother on the sofa and cleared her throat now and again, while her fat turkey-cock strutted up and down by the fire, and puffed out his chest, as if he would like to lay an egg. The corner of his bright handkerchief hung out of his hip pocket, in a wide curve over his posterior. He always squinted at the large cigars in father's box. Simeon was quite justified in his liking for them. At last, Arthur, distinguished among the sobbing, uniform litanies of the company in conference, the dear priest's encouraging voice. It seemed as solemn to him to-day as on their joint walks through the village. Yes, he even sounded " Ding Dong " before he said to my father's father : " Have your son Arthur Aronymus brought up in the Catholic faith. With this

humble approach in Jesus' holy name you will at one stroke," he said with emphasis, "avert every danger that threatens your young daughter, Dora." Arthur's anxious, tormented mother had almost agreed, when his father, rising, solemnly broke in : " Sir Priest," he began, speaking with a dignity that belonged at its best to the princely father of his mother, " Sir Priest, allow me in the name of all of us to express our thanks for your well-intentioned suggestion. Unfortunately the following circumstances compel me with all respect to refuse. I, like my father, my father's father, and his father's father's fathers, and the sainted fathers of Frau Henrietta, my wife, went straight to God ; and am I to allow their son, my young son, to go astray on other paths ? The Lord preserve us from all evil."

Then Arthur saw his father bow to his mother and kiss her on her white brow. That was surely the neighbourly love of which Bernard so often spoke. For so much love one to another he had never before seen. And both the Padersteins cried ! But suddenly Bernard was no longer in the room ! Instinctively Arthur hastened away in his seven-league boots ; caught up his emotionally-moved friend on his road home, and unexpectedly pushed his little tin whistle, his talisman on its bright green ribbon, a valuable relic, whose shrill sound startled the inhabitants of Gaesecke, into his slender hand. His Bernard looked exactly like the monk in the frame in his house at Christmas time ! Surely the guardian angel of children had appeared to him as to the other. . . Mother had often spoken about him. She felt released, not knowing quite in what way, from the terrible load that had lain like a millstone on her heart. Father, too, felt as she did, and both the Padersteins saw it, for they embraced my sorely-tried grandparents, and then their tall son Hugo, who always came through the keyhole suddenly like a piece of thread. But how father had changed ! He looked just like Jacob now in the picture in the scripture-book. Yet he had only had twelve sons, while father had brought nearly two dozen children into the world ; among them even girls like " beautiful Fanny." That was how the fat apothecary often spoke of the oldest daughter. He, Arthur, found only his Lenchen beautiful, but this evening all his sisters seemed behind his tired eyelids pink rosettes between his brothers' shoulders. And his father selected scouts out of the host of his twenty-three children. First his clever eldest son Menahem and his young

wife, and good Berthold and Ludwig, and well-nourished Albert and two of the younger brothers : and of the girls, Fanny, Deborah, Regina, Naomi, and Elischen, and in addition, the Padersteins' wide-awake Hugo. And they started out carefully, went through the dark village streets of Gacsecke and stealthily crept up round the little peaceful house of the priest. The dear oil lamp burnt on Bernard's table and a contented, peaceful smile played on his lips. Tall Hugo, who, standing on tiptoe, could see into the quiet room, watched the priest carefully fold large, written sheets, put them in an envelope and seal it. "It was an important document." So Hugo Paderstein solemnly repeated again and again to the listening brothers and sisters. Then in a flash they all jumped over the rose hedge to hide themselves ■ the back of the little yellow building. Elischen left half her drawers behind in the thorns. For the determined-looking priest had put on his black cape and was on the point of leaving the house ; the postilion had already blown his out-of-tune horn for the second time. Even if endless days and sleepless nights followed that memorable evening in Arthur Aronymus' parental house, his parents were nevertheless convinced of its good result. And yet, for the hundredth time, perhaps, his dear mother looked at Arthur secretly, shaking her head, and sighed very deeply like the snow-white cow whose calf had been taken away. Still the eldest brothers deliberated on many things : Julius' fat eyes sometimes fixed on the pages of the works of the old master. He had an idea ! His father would do well to send a gift of money to the convent of Saint Veronica on the hill at Paderborn, for a pious endowment. "Not bad," thought the father. One read his consent in the reflective expression on his face.

But Simeon rose surly, protested strongly against it and influenced the judgment of the other adult brothers and sisters. Fanny's wedding was postponed. "Do you want to celebrate a wedding in a house of mourning, my girl ?" her father scolded. Fanny brooded, yet she felt that she was a beautiful martyr. Regina knitted thoughtfully for weeks, one and the same stocking, without noticing it. What she saw was her sister at the stake. Last Sunday she had with a sigh wrapped Dora's beaded cloak round her shoulders, to get a breath of fresh air under the full moon. Elischen was sitting at the time beside Dora's tester bed ; the sick sister was afraid of ghosts. Then the eminent specialist

came from Lippstadt. "A professor to two hundred and fifty incurables," related Arthur and his priestly friend clasped his hands together in astonishment and said importantly, "Well, he's sure to cure your sister Dora." Carrying gleaming, promising cornflowers, the priest, Bernard, entered the home of his little playfellow and again met the Schueler family, all assembled together, with their children and friends, in the sitting-room. Duty had called the eldest son, who was married, back to his home and term had begun for Simeon and Julius at the University in the Federal capital.

Fanny's betrothed did not want to wait any longer ; they were married in the little synagogue and then they travelled down the Rhine ■ Aachen. There they intended to visit the castle of Emperor Charles. Fanny had suddenly grown frightened of the honeymoon, and Max and Lenchen were to go with her, Arthur Aronymus reported to Willi and Kaspar, chewing liquorice the while. "I don't care about the tedious Rhine," he said. "Now if it had been Regensburg on the Regen—now, that is a town I would like to see."

So there were present nineteen children and one grandchild : nine-year-old Oskar, Menahem's eldest son, nephew to Aronymus, who was a year younger, and in addition, lanky Hugo, Paderstein's hopeful giant, and the new farm assistant, Herr Filigrand. He always pronounced his name nasally, in the French fashion. Father and mother, all the children and the visitors rose as one man when the priest, happily agitated, appeared framed in the doorway. Arthur Aronymus' mother, all quivering, dropped the big spoon with which she was just filling a number of glasses with lemonade, into the glass bowl like a silver fish. But the father took the important roll from the hands of the distinguished messenger with controlled, suppressed joy, and Arthur Aronymus was astounded how his father knew how to control himself also in happy moments. But then big drops shimmered in his cool eyes, and covered them with sunshine. "Mother ! Mother ! read, read !" But the mother's trembling hand could not hold the happy news steady, and the nineteen children present, among them the four-year-old twins, Meta, found that they could all of them read. They stood round their father and mother and deciphered clearly what the Bishop of Paderborn had written "with his own hand," said Bernard, deigning to proclaim his

Christianity. Every sentence began with a large painted letter and ended with a full stop as round as a circle.

Not till cock-crow did my little father awake. His brothers and sisters, to the tiniest tot, were already standing at the garden gate, prepared to start out. And he had almost forgotten that his Bernard was going to—perhaps had already begun to read to the parishioners of Gaeesecke and of the neighbouring villages and hamlets his Bishop's pastoral letter. In his hurry he put on by mistake his nephew Oscar's old-fashioned buckskin trousers, and again he slid down the banister switchback. Off he galloped *per pedes* to the Catholic market-place. Just then his great friend came out of the little old church door, lingered thoughtfully on the top step of the grey, crumbling stone steps, holding the high shepherd's valuable letter to his flock in his hand. He swung the important scroll weightily over the heads of his flock, who, at his command, had assembled at the early ringing of the bells. My little Papa, tearing along, noticed his parents, hand in hand, listening fearfully, behind one of the fruit stalls that had been put up the day before for the Wednesday market. His father wore his grey frock-coat and the lighter-grey velvet waistcoat, and his brown-striped Sabbath neckcloth tied round his high collar, and he had put on his genteel grey top-hat, and mother had donned her velvet cape with the long fringes. Before Bernard unrolled his sermon, a flash of lightning suddenly came out of the cold, November-like clouds, so disturbingly and unexpected that even the gendarme was afraid; and the priest interpreted the natural phenomena to the frightened, superstitious people "wonderfully," as brother Julius afterwards expressed it. Not one of those present doubted that Heaven had allied itself with His Grace the Bishop, and spoke out of the mouth of the high Pastor. Arthur and his friends had understood that the Bishop had spoken to his flock through the mouth of Heaven, and had admonished them with a thunderclap. "I greet you with a troubled heart, in the name of Jesus Christ, my erring flock, and admonish you to listen to reason and not to persist in your sin of superstition. There is still time," read Bernard, and looked over the lifted heads, "there is still time for repentance and penance, my poor children, for the salvation of your souls. I," wrote the Bishop, "carry incessantly great anxieties and responsibilities in my heart. Woe betide you in the name of Jesus Christ, ■ you

quench your evil lust by the death by fire of a dear sister of the Holy Catholic faith or of a sister of the ancient house of Israel. Do not forget, in your dark hate, that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, was himself a Jew, sprung from the seed of David. With a thousand tongues I shall make known to Heaven the sin of the transgressors and their souls shall burn till the Last Day !

" Therefore return, you black sheep. Cease ! Cease ! For the third time, cease from sinning for Jesus Christ's sake, Our Lord. *Et vos igitur nunc qui dem tristitiam habetis, iterum autem videbo vos, et gaudebit cor vestrum : et gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis.* ' So you are now comfortless, but I shall appear to you again, your hearts will rejoice, and no man will take your joy away from you.' "

And again there was a flash of lightning, so bright on every side, that the whole of the Catholic church square stood in the fires of Purgatory. And the admonished, quivering people sank to their knees. Arthur's mother, too, in her wide crinoline. Only the father stood up, erect, but he wiped the drops of perspiration from his brow.

Sweetly-smelling March violets blossomed again on the meadows ; the children gathered their father's favourite flowers and put them in a glass vase on his desk. Since the Almighty had helped him so graciously he often used to read chapters out of the Bible to his sons and daughters. Arthur thought that he could not read so beautifully and fascinatingly as Grandfather Rabbinu had done. This year the Jewish Passover fell on the twenty-eighth of March ; and in the larder and on the sideboard, too, lay packets of unleavened bread. His dear mother had already spread honey on one tasty round cake for her Aronymus to nibble secretly on the way to school in the morning. Since then he stood always a little bewildered at the big food cupboard and glanced first at his mother and then at the shut drawer. The Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt had always greatly impressed him, and he could scarcely wait for the Eve of Passover. " To-morrow is the Jewish Easter," he confided to his two little schoolfellows. They did not tease him any more on this account, for they knew that Father Bernard who had gone did not despise this bread either.

His Grace the Bishop had long since called his nephew in Christ to the Cathedral in Paderborn. And the young priest had

lived for a year away from witchridden Gaeßecke's flowery paths behind all the thorn hedges, white and red. But a young journeyman, a Gaeßecker by birth, asserted firmly that he had seen the priest in Rome in St. Peter's. He had sat beside the Pope, and—Bernard would be his successor.

But he travelled a little with the Bishop through the towns and villages of Westphalia, visiting the parishes, appointing officials and also admonishing the rich, and—"It is time," said the Bishop, "to exterminate superstition by the root." Arthur Aronymus' mother sat in the high, bay window and sewed shirts and trousers for her smallest; mended the numerous rents in her son's trousers, and in the basket at her side lay countless pairs of brightly-ringed stockings. She saw two tall figures step through the garden gate; the dusk of Passover eve was already falling. The children were still playing with the village boys and girls in their big garden. They were laying faggots in a pile and swearing and spitting like the Westphalian waggoners. Arthur Aronymus danced along the wall on his hands and feet like his one-time sick sister Dora. He had dressed up, secretly, in one of her dresses and wore her hat with the wreath of clover leaves and the long velvet ribbons. The bishop and his young companion hid themselves behind the now grey straw, and watched the children play. "As the elders sing, so the youngsters chirp." Oskar assured his playmates that his Uncle Aronymus knew how to play the witch most interestingly. He himself had a rope round his body, and from it hung a cross made out of the bent stems of wild roses, one squashed rose still stuck to the soft wood, a drop of rose blood. And when the horde of executioners had dragged "Dora" to the pyre, they danced a devil's dance round their sacrifice. But first, the sinister, eight-year-old monk had held out his huge crucifix for the witch to kiss, and he prepared the sinner in the usual way on her last journey to the stake. None of the children really dared to light the pyre. But the howling witch, the fuming Arthur Aronymus, found the game—and the supposed fire—a little too hot, and with one bound he was over the heads of his abusive playfellows, and now the game really began; over the autumnal beds the stampeding, heavily-nailed boots of the children tore, so that the cats came running out of the cellar. What luck that father was sitting with the chemist in the little station restaurant playing lotto. "He is afraid of his

father," Bernard whispered in the Bishop's ear. "But it is really time for your Grace to put a stop to this." He had to-day been himself a witness of the grotesque game in miniature.

And only the noisy laughter of the innocent children kept the Bishop from realising the seriousness of the childish game. The crowd had never had such fun as they had to-day. Their young laughter was infectious, and set the Bishop's diaphragm in stormy motion. Supporting himself on Bernard's arm, the prelate stepped out from between the branches of an old tree. "Well, well, well, my dear, severe son in Christ, your Bishop has never despised laughter. So forgive him, your old spiritual brother, that he is now laughing with those whose laughter comes from the springs of youth—he knows how often it can be bitter." That was so like his Bishop, thought Bernard, and he would have liked to embrace him for his wise, jovial words, but he had to fetch all "the rascals" to that biggest child of them all, his Bishop. His greatest difficulty was to catch the temperamental witch, Dora, his wild little friend, Arthur Aronymus. He brought him in his arms, but very much alive, to His Grace, Bishop Lavater of Westphalia. The servants had already come up by now, sent out by Frau Schueler, to see who the two strangers could be who seemed to have strayed into the garden. And they dragged the children like cart-loads into the house. "The piglets must be bathed before they can take part in the Holy Passover evening."

But when the mother heard that the priest had come from Paderborn with his Bishop, she herself hurried bravely down the gravel path, for she was still slim, well built and agile.

That evening, in father's embroidered arm-chair sat His Grace, Bishop Lavater, and beside him dear Bernard. Then came beaming Arthur Aronymus, then Dora, more charming than before her illness. Then came the enthusiastic youth Berthold. Then Elischen, then came Julius; next to him sat Regina, and by Regina sat her new-betrothed, the chemist's assistant from Elberfeld in Wuppertal. At first his parents had been against his choice, for Engelhard came of a canting Lutheran family; Regina, her father's favourite daughter, who always had a weakness for apothecaries, had cried till her eyes were as red as her hands, and Herr Schueler decided to buy a chemist's shop for the young Christian suitor. Since then Titchen had stood in a garlanded frame on the dressing-table of her future parents-in-law.

On the bridegroom's right sat little Lenchen. Sometimes the Bishop's eyes lighted with particular tenderness on the delicate, quiet little girl. She reminded him of his sister Helene, now abbess of the convent near Schwelm. Then came the two Metas. They sat as close to each other as if they were grown together, and one heart beat for both; both had curly brown hair and always put their spoons or forks into their cherry-red lips at the same time. And then came Judith, Johanna, Eugenie, Luise, Maierlein, Grete, Elfriede and beside her Tita, so named by her mother; and, beside Tita, Albert, Edmund, Alfons, Ludwig, Emmi, Simeon, Hedwig, Paula and Eleonora, named after Burger's poem "Eleonora came before the dawn," and the dear suffering Alex sat, as always, in his invalid chair by his father.

Opposite him the sons of his Spanish schoolfriend, who had been murdered a few years ago while praying in the synagogue in Saragossa.

Oskar did not take his eyes off Bernard and his Bishop, which was most annoying to his little uncle, Arthur Aronymus. That this dressed-up fanatic little boy in an overall would one day be baptised by his dear friend the convert Cardinal Paulus Kassel, who had received the Holy Sacrament of Baptism from the baptised Franciscan monk Paul Kassel did not enter His Grace's head for a moment. Max, who had been missing, suddenly entered the big dining-room; he had been crying. For the children in their game had trampled on a laboriously-executed calf's head that he had drawn in the sand. The father pushed a Louisdor into his trouser pocket. His Grace was touched that the poorest of the Jewish community, seven Israelites, had been invited to share the Passover meal; and that father Schueler and his kind-hearted wife seemed to pay most attention to them. "This ■ our dear friend and Passover brother, Perlmutter. He never misses this evening at our table. And that," pointing to the pedlar, whom till a year ago Arthur, Willi and Kaspar had jeered at, "is my dear friend, Lammle Zilinsky of Lemberg." Zilinsky looked distractedly up and down at his caftan. "And the brothers Siegfried Ostermorgen and Alexander Ostermorgen, seekers after knowledge, who beg Your Grace to speak for them to the Rector of Paderborn." The old night watchman, who had got up at midday that day, looked by habit for his horn, but the

father noticed it, put his arm on his narrow shoulders and said to the Bishop, " This tireless guardian of Gaesecke has watched long and so has been able to delve deep into the Word of the Lord." That was what Grandfather Rabbinu might have said, and, for a moment, Arthur incomprehensibly hated his clever father. And now it was the gossiping journeyman's turn. The father introduced him as his schoolfriend : " Nathaniel Brennessel our tireless wanderer." Heavens, thought Aronymus, and stuck his tongue out secretly at Dora, who liked to pretend that she was now grown up, for it was Brennessel who had seen Bernard sitting on the Papal chair.

Next to this wanderer sat Josef, smiling with wide-open, poor eyes, Perlmutter's eldest son. He could interpret dreams like Joseph in Egypt. At last Christine put the steaming Passover soup with the tasty dumplings on the table, and the parents observed with joy that their princely guest was no despiser of food. And to him, the unleavened bread dipped in Moselle tasted excellent. He begged his honoured host to keep up the ceremonies exactly as they always had been, and not to shorten them in any way ; otherwise he would feel like an interloper, and he was feeling so much at home. And while the father and the Bishop discussed the words of the Torah that were written by God Himself with thunder and lightning, Arthur Aronymus, delighted to have his friend with him again, showed him the new tower in the nursery which he had built out of a thousand bricks and coloured stones. He was about to swear, but Bernard noticed it in time and Aronymus swallowed the little devil, skin and bone. " And the law shall be kept," the father was just expounding, when Bernard, holding my little father by the hand, entered the room again, " carefully like a child in a velvet dress and embroidered with shells." His Grace attentively concurred with every word said by the wise father, my father's father, with benevolent gestures, and both men agreed that " with a little love it can be managed that Jew and Christian break their bread together in unity," " even when ■ is unleavened bread that is offered," concluded handsomely the mother of my now long dead father : Arthur Aronymus.

## THE DESPICABLE SWINE

By ALFRED DOEBLIN

*Translated by* MARY FOWLER

Alfred Doebelin, doctor of medicine and author. Born 1878 in Stettin, lives in Berlin. Published his first volume of stories in 1913. Made a great success in 1916 with his novel "The Three Leaps of Wang-Lun." His novel, "Wallenstein," 1920, made his reputation. "Mountains, Seas and Giants," 1924, ■ an attempt to picture the future. His latest book ■ a collection of essays on the Jewish question. Doebelin was in 1927 elected a member of the Prussian Academy of Arts.

HUBERT FEUCHTEDENGEL—Neuromantist—squandering the forty-two thousand marks of his inheritance, drinking, boozing—then married for four years, till his wife turned him out, because he only came up once a week to snore away, to get his second wind and to take a cleansing bath—then for sixteen long terms a medical student by dint of sponging and scholarships, till the golden final came, and at thirty-eight years of age and a good many months he is ■ last a doctor at a small cottage-hospital in Lorraine. Meanwhile an exquisite fancy had established itself.

He sees clearly before his mind's eye, in broad daylight, a tapeworm with countless moving, creeping limbs, laying eggs, spreading eggs, raining eggs ; the beast moves proudly in a bath of small, drop-like eggs and adds to them. Then the observer gets out of bed, goes thoughtfully to a romantist's room ; he doesn't need to say anything—the other one knows it already, the tapeworm is there. When an old drinking companion fails to find one, Hubert disappears to Greifswald, but reappears years later in South Germany as an independent doctor. Now he knows ; he hasn't a tapeworm ; what one sees in the early morning is not a tapeworm but congestion ■ blood. And in his hospital in Lorraine ■ had arrived ■ the conclusive, scientific conviction that with him ■ was a matter of sepsis or blood poisoning, confined to the head, doubtless a fancy, but bordering on sepsis.

His Chief is named Werner Strick. A vehement man.

Feuchtedengel doesn't impress him, but they are boon companions. At the side of Strick, red-faced, tall, and wearing spurs on his rounds, the trustworthy, good-natured, tubby figure of his assistant, holding his patients' list in front of his short, snub nose, and then staring at the ward-beds, steamed with zeal.

After two months, Feuchtedengel, wearing his black frock-coat, consults his Chief at four-thirty in the afternoon, just before the round of the wards, on the subject of sepsis of the brain. Explains that he wants to pay, wants to be treated like an ordinary patient. Strick pulls on his boots, his patient, on an iron chair, helping him, takes hold of his excited visitor by the arm, and sits him down in the white-painted consulting room. "Show me your tongue! Stand up, toes together, shut your eyes! Romberg negative." Draws the heavy brown curtains, sticks the lamp behind Feuchtedengel's back and mirrors his eyes. "Nothing there! Sleep it off, man. Go home!"

Three weeks later, Hubert rolls up again in his black stomach-girdling frock-coat. His Chief hurls a couple of spurred boots at his shins. Hubert grumbles, looks hurt, picks up the boots, and stands humbly at the door. Then the handle of the walking-stick comes flying at him. For three days his Chief doesn't see him.

Snowy winter. New Year's Eve. They make things hum in the jolly railway station restaurant. At five in the morning they leave the bar and go upright down New Bridge Street through Chapel Street. Feuchtedengel cannot keep his conviction to himself. Medicine, he says, develops, but feebly; there ■ a circumscribed, localised sepsis; one can have it, can have it for a long time. Werner Strick has left his overcoat at the station, he ■ wearing a pilot-jacket, and carries his riding whip. He sends the Swabian back to the station; and when he has got his overcoat, and the tubby fellow gapes humbly at him, he flies into a furious temper with Hubert Feuchtedengel, his assistant. Baahes in his bowler hat, spits on the black railings of the bridge, and swears. As they walk on, Strick curses. He has had enough of this. Bites his cigar: "You swine. You despicable swine! You are a thoroughly despicable swine. But I'll show you! You come along with me. You've got sepsis and you're going to be treated for it. Do you get me?"

Feuchtedengel is agreeable, tears of joy rush to his eyes. He ■ so moved that he can't even straighten out the dent in his hat.

"We'll get you, my lad!" cries Strick. Chews at his cigar.  
"We'll get you, my lad!" His spurs ring as he trips up over the announcement boards outside the cinema.

In the consulting room, he switches on the light with his left hand and shoves his bareheaded assistant into a chaiselongue, and turns up his sleeves. Says the fat fellow, uncertainly: "Aren't you going to take your coat off. Shouldn't we wake the nurse?"

"Lie down and keep your mouth shut, you damned scoundrel." Strick smokes spasmodically, gulps, looks in the medicine cupboard.

"You are going to get such a dose," he remarks venomously to his pupil, "that you'll burst—Kollargol for your confounded sepsis. How much do you want?"

"Five grammes," smiles the happy Hubert, looking with satisfaction at the swollen veins of his forearm.

"Put your arm down, we haven't gone so far yet. I'll give you five grammes in your face. Fifteen you'll have. Twenty if you don't shut your jaw. I'll spit at you, you despicable swine!"

Werner Strick leaves the cupboard, brushes up, washes in the immense operating basins, still wearing his overcoat. His black hat sways with this weighty occupation. Discreetly, from behind him, Feuchtedengel with ecstatic eyes begs his Chief: "Twenty-five grammes. I can stand it. Word of honour. I need a lot. More than the maximum dose."

The Chief keeps scornful silence. The sublimate sprays—the hat jumps right over the basins. The Swabian bends down to pick it up, and gets a kick on the bottom.

The smoker stands bulkily with the twenty-gramme hypodermic in his hand in front of his red-checked assistant, who sits in the chair, his left arm bared, with a rubber band round it, stretched out triumphantly. Hubert is all agog with joy, but he doesn't want it noticed. Turns his head away from Strick to the wall. "A lovely picture that," he babbles bashfully, "in der Kloster Kueche. The monastery kitchen. Cuisine de monastère. So many monks and only one calf."

Above him Strick hisses: "Pig, how much do you want?"

"Twenty-five," moans Hubert, unable to restrain himself touching the other's arm imploringly.

The canula pierces the distended vein, the handle of the hypodermic sinks, the thick, dark brown fluid falls. Hubert,

pressing his forearm hard against the arm of the chair, snarls, roars, screams, fetching his voice from the bottom of his chest, twists his bottom, rump and shoulders on the chair, pulls a face, lifts his eyebrows, his forehead full of lines. His arm is a beast that has bitten into him ; and he wants to get away from it. He pants : " More, Werner, more, don't stop, don't stop." He doesn't want his pleasure spoilt. He digs his toes into the floor.

" Fifteen. Shut your mouth. Eighteen, nineteen. You won't get away with it this time, lad ! Twenty. That isn't all yet. Twenty-two, yes, and twenty-four. There we are."

Turns his back on him, and goes over to the basin. There ■ a sound of stamping behind him.

Loud frantic breathing, several seconds of silence, then dull creaking, cracking, rumbling, shattering—silence, silence.

On the white flagstones, black and unwieldy, lay the square, swollen, big-paunched, tree-long beast, stretched out on his belly ; the arm of the chair squashed under his chest, with a chair-leg rising aloft between his knees like a crooked flagstaff.

" The blackguard," says Strick triumphantly at the tap, slaps his thigh with his wet palm, " twenty-five grammes. I said so ! Thirty. Why not forty. Ha ! mad thing. Ha ha ! " Stamps nearer. " Your tongue—show me your tongue, lad." No movement.

Strick shakes the body, and roars, peals of laughter : " Show me your tongue. If you're dead, you're dead. But don't keep me up here in the middle of the night, you wretch ! " Takes off his overcoat. The body moves, the fingers uncurl, the knees bend, the chair-leg sways slightly. Strick puts his overcoat on again, empties the dish of sublimate, pours a flood of water out of two full basins at the back of Hubert's head right across the room.

The chair keeps still.

A stream of water rushes into the vessel. With steadily growing rage, Strick throws basin after basin over the body. Glowing with fury, he hurls the basin with the splashing water at the black, inert mass. " There you have the whole lot. Half the sea ! ■ would be better still if it were sand and we puddled you in."

Taps turned off, lights put out, Strick stamps up to his room, banging the doors.

As he is pulling on his nightshirt something comes heavily and slowly up the stairs, stops at his door and knocks hollowly. Strick, half asleep, snores " Come in," and lies down again.

Over the threshold shuffled out of the dark hall into the room, grey with the light of the dawn, a crooked figure, with bowed head, swaying, and dripping water, and behind it, a second, holding it up by the scruff of the neck.

They stand by the bed, dumb. "Werner," mutters the slanting, swaying mass, after a time.

"Come in," he snores, then he opens his eyes, because something cold and damp has gripped him. He sits up slowly. "Who ■ that ?"

"Werner," murmurs the one in front, "I fell into the river from the bridge, so I couldn't come with you immediately. You didn't hear me when I called."

"What are you, man ?"

"I fell in the river when I fetched your coat. I kept on calling."

"Then give me my coat, you rascal, you ; where is it ?"

"I haven't got it."

Strick wrings his hands in despair : "Aren't you drunk, you miserable creature, didn't the Kollargol finish you off ? What am I to do with you ?" Overwhelmed, he screams : "Get out, get out, you septic beast. I am sleeping."

"Werner, you must bandage my arm."

"Who is that behind you ?"

The Swabian whispers mournfully : "That is the devil."

Strick clutches his head in horror. "What am I to do with him ! In the middle of the night !"

"He fished me out of the river, when I was nearly dead. You must bandage my arm."

"But you're dead already. Where is your medical knowledge ?"

Hubert keeps whispering stubbornly, the devil backing him from behind, "You must bandage my arm, a fish bit me."

Strick rolls helplessly out of bed, pulls on stockings and trousers, and sighs, "Come along !"

He bandages him downstairs : shaking his head, he watches them both depart, and shakes his fist behind them.

The next afternoon before he went his rounds, Feuchtedengel strolled into his room with his companion in broad daylight.

"Where have you come from ? You're dead long ago."

"I suppose I am dead ; but the arm won't heal."

Strick walks round the two of them ; the Swabian is quite dry ; his trousers and his coat are shrunk and muddy.

"Your things are dry already ; where do you hang out during the day, man ?"

"Out in the open. When this fellow hasn't any time he hangs me up on a tree. That's how I've dried so quickly."

"That's very practical. But why does he keep taking you down ?"

"My arm hurts. You injected too much Kollargol. I remember now : it was afterwards you threw me into the river. God forgive you for that. But now I'm dry again."

Strick stands straddle-legged in front of him, tapping his riding-crop against the polished tops of his boots. "I'm not going to talk to you now at all, you muddied oaf. I want to talk to this fellow. Why do you keep fetching this blockhead here to me ? What's the idea of all this drying business ? Why don't you take him away and be done with it ?"

"I can't, Mister. We haven't any wood or coal. We've no more heat. I can't bring any more like that. They must be dried first."

"But why do you always bring him to me, when you see what's wrong with him ?"

"Because he insists on coming to you, Mister."

"I'm called Doctor. And if he insists on coming, what about it ?"

"He gives me no peace. He thinks so much of you. You cured his tapeworm. He whines from morning to night because of his arm. Whines and whines."

"But am I to go on treating him when he is already stinking ?"

"I don't know, Mister, Doctor."

"For Heaven's sake, then, tell him he's got a fracture. Bury him, shove him in the fire. I have no time to waste on him !"

"I'll tell him ; but he is so crafty, so stubborn, he won't give in."

"I insist on it. I insist. You should have done that yesterday. What will people think of me, if I go about with such a low fellow, and two at a time ? Who is going to let me attend them with such a stink ?"

"That's what I say. It ruins your business. It hurts me, Mister. Get along with you now, or——! Get a move on. Hi !"

He shakes Feuchtedengel by the scruff of the neck, so that the jaws clap in his rolling head.

"My arm, my arm."

"There isn't any arm. Nothing doing. Get along with you!" Strick lifts the whip in his fist behind them.

On the stairs, the Swabian still keeps whimpering. From above comes a voice like thunder through the door: "Get out! At once! And the devil with you." The devil hurried, and they clattered down the stairs.

Strick went up to his room after lunch to write letters. Four-footed pattering on the stairs—someone knocks, twice. Strick thinks, I won't answer. They knock again, kick. One whispers: "He isn't at home." The other whines: "He is. He must be sleeping. Knock again. I can't stand it any more."

The door reels under the blows, a liqueur glass falls off the sideboard. One whispers, "You see, he is drinking liqueur." The door is opened cautiously. Strick sprawls over his papers, pretending to be asleep. The devil drops his right arm. Feuchtedengel falls forward, has to creep on all fours, his chest almost touching the floor, his arms dangle loose, the wrists touching the carpet; in raising his head to look at something, he bangs his forehead.

His companion taps the sleeper lightly on the ear. It rouses his spleen.

He stands up, facing the two of them, red as a turkey cock, swollen in the face, eyes blazing.

"I've had enough of this!"

The devil lets Feuchtedengel flop on the floor, and puts his arms akimbo. "Are you going to start on me, now?"

"Clear out, you and this stinking blackguard! Go to——"

"I can't! I can't do a thing with the fellow. He won't stop howling, he won't stop howling, and I can't stand it. Bandage him up, and let's get it over."

Strick rushes up and down the room. "But he stinks already, you odd fellow; he's decaying, as you look at him, in his clothes."

"I can't help that. That's not what I am here for. We'll try another doctor."

Feuchtedengel on the floor shakes his head. "I don't want to. I don't want to go to another doctor."

Strick roars. "Get out with you, out with you, you scum."

He gets hold of the Swabian under the chin, and lifts him up in the air. The Swabian cries out, and looks at him beseechingly. The devil catches him by the arm : " You mustn't touch the man. I'm going to leave him here, and I shan't fetch him till you've bandaged him.—And woe to you if you harm him."

He trots to the door.

" What am I to do with the fellow, here ? "

" I can't waste all day with him. Don't want to have any more to do with him at all. I'm sick of him. I'm sick of him. He's got a fancy. You see what you can do."

He grasps the door handle. Strick pulls his hand away from the knob.

" What can I do with the fellow, here ? He's dead. I can't do anything with him."

" Please, master, I'm going out to get something to eat."

" I'm not your master."

" Then I'm not your slave, either. I am an honest devil, who does his work like everyone else. You mustn't make my work any harder."

" You want to teach me how to behave, do you ? Learn manners first yourself."

The devil takes his hand off the knob. " I won't put up with this any longer. I really can't put up with it. Feuchtedengel, will you help me ? "

" I can't. I want him to bandage me."

" Come on ! We'll show him ! "

He catches the limp Swabian by the scruff of his neck with his left hand, pulls him up, holds him out in front of him like a shield and goes for Strick. And Strick, wild with fury and unarmed, lays about him, hitting the scolding, pleading, sobbing Feuchtedengel on the forehead, between the open jaws, on the throat. The devil hides behind Feuchtedengel, who anivels : " That's the way the devil protects me ! "

" Don't be a coward," pants the devil behind him, excitedly. " We're getting him now."

" He hasn't done anything to me."

" We're getting him now ! "

Smack ! Feuchtedengel gets a blow between the shoulders. And as the devil bends down to see what is happening, he gets a blow on the temple. and everything grows dark in front of him,

his body sags, his knees bend, and in falling he has just enough strength to pull Feuchtedengel on top of him.

Strick stands laughing above them both. He ■ breathless, opens all the windows, and pours out a glass of brandy for himself. He sits down on the sofa and asks mockingly : " It will be spring time in January ; how far are we, now ? "

There is a rattling at the side of the fat fellow. The corpulent body sways, rocks. The devil gets up with an effort behind his shield, and groans : " So far ! "

A laugh from the sofa.

The devil guffaws—" We've gone so far."

Strick approaches stiffly. The devil whispers in the fat fellow's ear. " I'm going to box with my left hand now. Watch me do it."

" With whom ? " he whines mistrusting.

" Look out ! " hisses the other mendaciously.

The blows fall on Feuchtedengel again, but now the devil jumps with him from corner to corner.

Feuchtedengel becomes alert, too. It seems to him as if he has strength in his legs.

Suddenly he feels that he is being lifted in the air ; he flies over a chair five paces away at the attacking foe, who, struck by the impact on chest and neck, borne down to the floor by the burden, tumbles on to his knee and turns sideways on to his hands. They fall with a double crash. Now the devil bends over him, one, two, three times he strikes his fist on temple and eyes.

Then he strangles him, sits up blowing like a frog, on top of the man who has turned blue ; he is pleased, glances at him happily, as his mouth snaps less and less, as he kicks his legs about, then lies quiet. He keeps trying to make him more blue. Pats himself : " Oh, oh, that ■ lovely."

He walks about the room, puffing leisurely, looks at the books, and after blowing his nose, sits down at the table and has a glass of cognac.

Half an hour. Strick's polished riding boot-tops shine.

" When I was alive I was a stable boy. A long time ago. I want to have riding-boots as well, with spurs like a gentleman, and a riding-whip too."

He sets down his glass, pulls off the boots, first the left, then the right, and gets into them himself. He takes the ivory handled

whip from the wardrobe and struts in front of the mirror. "Oh, how fine you look! Now you need a fur coat, a warm cap, and you are a baron." He fetches the coat from the wardrobe, and the fur-lined cap from the rack. Puts on the coat, and sets the cap on his head. Says, contemplatively, to the fresh air at the window: "We're going out for a bit. We have done enough work. It ■ spring time in January." Feuchtedengel sees him stalking pompously to the door. "What is going to become of me?"

The devil maintains a contemptuous silence and locks up behind him.

The two of them are left lying alone.

After a while the fat one calls "Strick." Strick twists his head askew, and stares at his companion.

"How are you, Strick?"

"Now I'm dead, too," he stammers plaintively. "They've taken off my boots," he sobs.

Five o'clock strikes. "How much longer are we going to be kept lying here?" Strick wails.

"I don't know. He's going about amusing himself now in your clothes. He's playing the baron. And we have been left lying here as if it didn't matter. Who is going to do your rounds? It's five o'clock."

The doctor lifts his arm: "Five o'clock already and no rounds yet. One of us must go, you or I."

"I can't, Werner. I really can't. My skin is already peeling. What will the patients think of our hospital if I go the rounds?"

"Show me," says Strick. He turns towards him. "I am still a little warm; I can manage a couple of hours. Oh, dear! I've been flayed."

He limps to the door. It is locked. The side door is open. The nurses stare at him in the ward. One whimpers: "Are you dead as well? Oh! God! First the assistant and then you!" Another cries: "It's all happened so quickly! Now we have no doctor at all." The third looks sympathetically at his feet. "You are going about in stockinged feet already!"

The sister expresses her heartfelt condolences also on behalf of the sister of the adjoining ward, who is away, in case he doesn't return.

They accompany him to the exit, give him two wreaths they had bought for someone else; wave their handkerchiefs behind

him. He stops outside his flat ; he is sick of his room, of Feuchtedengel and the devil. He wants to buy a decent coffin to ■ with the wreaths. The porter lends him a sheepskin and a pair of felt slippers. " Be quick, doctor," he says, " and you'll manage it in a couple of hours. Leave the wreaths here. I'll place them on top of you."

Strick rushes through the shops. In the Chapel Street he feels tired. He runs to buy two silver-headed riding-whips. Up in the snow-covered park he sinks down on a bench, slips right on to his side, down from the seat. He is happy. " Now I shall have honest burial. The other two will have to see to that." He lies there in the snow, in the dark.

The devil sees him there, late at night, knocks the snow off him very amiably. " You mustn't overdo things, my dear chap. You'll soon be better." He leads him along by the scruff of his neck. Strick, annoyed at his misfortune, flies into a temper because he is addressing him familiarly. He tells him that he mustn't, and puts on an air of importance. The other remarks haughtily that he is now wearing the fine coat and cap and the polished riding-boots, and he is also going to keep the two new riding-whips. Strick demands the return of the whips, curses, abuses, till the other shoves him into the gutter on the road leading to Park Street, vowing that he will fetch poor Feuchtedengel and spoil his game for him.

As the two sway on his arms, the devil bellows, and curses. He wants them to tell him who is the gentleman now, and who the scamp—who is making life difficult for other people ; what ragamuffins they both are—one without a hat and with an unpressed overcoat, so that one feels ashamed to meet a lady, and the other wearing felt slippers, and the porter's moth-eaten fur and with two riding-whips on top of that. No horse and can't even walk by himself.

He hangs them up to dry, not on a tree according to his instructions, but on the palings of a fence, with a view of old iron, rusty engines and broken kitchen utensils. He didn't fetch them down till the morning. Strick was full of venom. The devil brags cocksurely as he walks along with them. " Now we are three. If the gendarme comes and wants to arrest me, we shall be four. I must hurry." Strick sniggers. " You dog ! ■ it hadn't been for Feuchtedengel you would not have got me."

"What's that!" hisses the devil. "You call me dog! And you claim to be gentlemen! I'm fed up!"

"So am I," sneers Strick.

"My arm," whimpers Hubert, waking up. "Who will bandage it?"

"I'm fed up!" roars the devil, turning round, "shut your mouths."

He lunges backwards, there in the avenue, scrapes like a horse.

"What ■ he doing?" the two in the snowdrift wonder.

He puffs himself up, the coat bursts, his stomach protrudes, becomes as large as a globe, reaches from neck till below the knee, his trousers follow and then his waistcoat. His arms stick out like the poles on a globe. He bends down, panting, seizes the doctor, who wants to spit at him, and slips him up his left arm, over the shoulder, on to his neck. Strick slips down between waistcoat and neck, head foremost, his feet waving in the air. The devil tears off the kicking slippers. Feuchtedengel sinks down to the right. The stomach gets bigger, full of folds, which fill in, become taut. The devil blows out his cheeks. The globe steams, glows, scorches the clothes, dark blue flames break out, stand out from it like a bell. The devil takes a breath, pulls himself together, purring, shakes himself. Ashes, white flakes fall off him.

He looks amiably down at his belly; says "Ah! dear little belly." Picks up the slippers, both riding-whips and goes off for a walk, alone.

To a girl who speaks to him in the Great Harbour Street, because he looks so exhausted, he says: "One of them, Strick, Mister Strick, Doctor Strick, had very strong muscles, but the other one with the tapeworm was worse. He cried and moaned and howled all day long, and would not leave off. I got fed up with him. And now, look here, my dear young lady——"

"Let us go into the Café Brown, Mister——"

"Certainly, Madame. And now they neither of them have anything. They are now neither in heaven nor in hell. Now they are just dead."

## THE UNSEEN COLLECTION

### *An Episode of the German Inflation*

By STEFAN ZWEIG

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

Stefan Zweig, born 1881 in Vienna. Since the death of Hugo von Hoffmansthal (a baptised Jew), and Arthur Schnitzler, the most important representative of the Viennese school. His first work, a book of poems, appeared in 1901. This was followed by his monographs on Verlaine and Verhaeren, and his "Three Masters" (Balzac, Dickens and Dostoevsky). He has translated Baudelaire and Verhaeren into German. His collected poems appeared in 1924.

His novels are world-famous and translated into many languages.

Two stations out of Dresden an elderly gentleman got into our carriage, greeted the company courteously, and then as I looked up, nodded again to me, as to an old acquaintance. I could not place him at first, but as soon as he smilingly mentioned his name I instantly remembered him. He was one of the most respected art and antique dealers in Berlin, and before the war I had often been to him to view and buy old books and autographs. We chatted a bit about things that didn't matter. Then he suddenly said :

" I must tell you where I have just come from. It is the strangest experience I have had in the thirty-seven years of my career as an art dealer. You probably know how things are now in art-dealing, since the value of money began to dissipate like vapour. The new rich have suddenly discovered a love of Gothic Madonnas and incunabula, old etchings and pictures. You cannot give them as much as they want. You must actually be on your guard against them lest they clear you out of house and home. They would love to buy the very stud out of your shirt-sleeve, the lamp off your writing-table. So it is getting constantly more difficult to find new goods. Excuse my using the word goods for these things which to one of us are objects to be spoken of with awe—but this evil race has accustomed even me ■

consider a wonderful Venetian incunabulum as bringing so many dollars, and a drawing of Guercino as the transmigration of a couple of hundred-franc notes. Against the penetrating importunity of this sudden buying mania all resistance ■ futile. So I had overnight been cleared out again. I would have preferred to pull down the blinds, ashamed that our old-established business that my father had taken over from my grandfather had nothing left to offer except some rubbish that in the old days no street-hawker would have put on his barrow.

"In this quandary I hit on the idea of going through our old books, to dig out some of our old customers, from whom I might be able to cajole back a few things. An old list of customers ■ a kind of cemetery, especially at a time like this, and I really did not learn much from it. Most of the people who used to buy from us had long ago been compelled to sell what they had by auction, or they were dead, and the few that remained did not seem very hopeful. Then I suddenly came on a big bundle of letters from perhaps the oldest of our customers, who had escaped my memory only because since the war had broken out in 1914 he had not come to us for a single purchase or enquiry. The correspondence went back—this is no exaggeration—nearly sixty years. He had bought from my father and grandfather, yet I could not recall that he had ever entered our shop during the entire thirty-seven years I had been there. Everything pointed to his being a queer, old-fashioned, punctilious old gentleman, one of those backwoods Germans who have here and there survived in some little provincial town, rare specimens, right up to our own day. His letters were masterpieces of calligraphy, neatly written, and all sums were underlined with a ruler in red ink. And he wrote ■ his figures twice, so that there should be no possibility of error. This, and the fact that he only used odd scraps of paper and saved envelopes indicated the pettiness and fanatical thrift of a hopeless provincial. In addition to his name, these remarkable documents were always formally signed with all his titles—Forestry Commissioner, retired, Lieutenant, retired, Holder of the Iron Cross, First Class. As a veteran of the war of the '70's he must, if he were still alive, be carrying a good eighty years on his back. But this absurdly parsimonious person manifested as a collector extraordinary discernment, amazing knowledge and excellent taste. As I slowly drew up the list of his orders over a period of

nearly sixty years, the earliest amounting only to a few shillings, I realised that this little provincial at a time when you could have bought for a dollar a stack of the finest German woodcuts, must have quietly got together a collection of prints that could hold its own at the side of the most famous in the new State. What he had bought from us alone for shillings and pence at a time in the course of half a century, represented at present values an amazing sum ; and on top of that one would expect him to have pulled off as good bargains at auctions and other dealers. Since 1914 we had not received another order from him. I knew everything, however, that had happened in the art world, and the auction or private sale of such a collection could not have escaped me. And consequently this amazing man must still be alive, or the collection was in the hands of his heirs.

" The matter interested me so much that I left the very next evening, last night, it was, straight for one of those impossible provincial towns you find in Saxony. As I came out of the tiny railway station and strolled along the High Street, it seemed to me almost impossible that in the midst of these banal stucco buildings with their bourgeois lumber there should be living in one of these houses a man who owned the most magnificent prints of Rembrandt, Duerer and Mantegna, perfectly complete. I was astonished to be told when I enquired at the Post Office whether there was a forestry commissioner of this name living in the town that the old gentleman was really still alive, and I set out on my journey with much heart-beating, I confess, before noon.

" It was not hard to find his house. He lived on the second floor of one of those cheap provincial houses that some speculative builder had hastily run up in the 'sixties. The lower floor was occupied by an honest master-tailor. On the left side of the second floor gleamed the brass plate of a post-master, and to the right there was at last a little enamel plate with the name of the Forestry Commissioner on it. In answer to my irresolute ring a very old, white-haired lady, wearing a neat black coif came out at once. I handed her my card and asked if I could speak to the Forestry Commissioner. She looked first at me and then at my card, surprised and with a certain measure of distrust. In this world-forsaken spot, in this old-fashioned house, a visit from the outside world seemed to be an event. But she asked me in a friendly tone to wait, took the card, and went inside. I heard her

whispering, and then suddenly the loud, hectoring voice of a man: 'Oh, Mr. R. . . . of Berlin, of the big antique-dealers. . . . Show him in, show him in. . . . Very glad to meet him!' And presently the little woman tripped back and invited me into the parlour.

"I took off my things, and entered.

"In the middle of a modest room stood very upright an old but still vigorous man, with a bushy moustache and wearing a corded, semi-military indoor coat, who held out both hands cordially to me. Yet this frank gesture of unmistakable glad and spontaneous welcome was belied by a strange stiffness in his attitude as he stood there. He did not move a step towards me, and I—a little taken aback—had to go right up to him and take his hand. As I was about to take it, I saw by the rigid way in which he held it out that it did not seek mine, but was waiting. The next minute it was all clear to me—the man was blind.

"Since my childhood I have felt uncomfortable in the presence of a blind person. I could never avoid a certain shame and embarrassment at feeling a man fully alive, and yet knowing that he could not feel me as I felt him. This time, too, I had to suppress my alarm when I saw these vacant, rigid eyes beneath the white bushy eyebrows. But the blind man did not give me much time for surprise, for my hand had hardly touched his, when he shook it vigorously, and renewed his welcome in stormy, sociably blustering fashion. 'A rare visit,' he said with a broad smile for me. 'It is really strange that one of the big men from Berlin should stray into our little hole. . . . But one must be careful, when one of your dealers takes the train. . . . They say in our parts—doors and pockets shut when the gipsies come. . . . I can well imagine why you have hunted me up. . . . Business is bad now in our poor, impoverished Germany. There are no more people to buy, and so the big people think of their old customers again, and go out to find their lost sheep. . . . But I am afraid you will not do much with me. . . . We poor old pensioners are glad to have a crust of bread on our table. We can't keep pace with the mad prices you have now. . . . We are out of it for good. . . .!'

"I immediately explained that he had misunderstood me. I had not come to sell him anything. I had only found myself in the neighbourhood and I could not resist calling on such an old

customer of our house and one of the greatest collectors in Germany. I had hardly spoken the words—one of the greatest collectors in Germany—than his face underwent a transformation. He still stood upright and rigid in the middle of the room, but now there was a sudden brightness and pride in his attitude. He turned in the direction where he presumed his wife was, as ■ to say—'Did you hear that?' There was happiness in his voice, not a trace of the old brusque, military tone, but indeed something gentle, even tender, as he turned to me, and said:

"That is really very, very nice of you. . . . But you will find that you have not come here for nothing. You shall see something that you don't get a chance of seeing every day, not even in your purse-proud Berlin . . . a few pieces that can't be bettered in the "Albertina," nor in God-damned Paris. . . . Yes, when one has been collecting for sixty years one comes across all sorts of things that otherwise you don't find in the street. Luise, give me the key of the cupboard.'

"Here came something unexpected. The little old woman who was standing at his side, listening with a friendly smile to our conversation, suddenly lifted up to me both her hands imploringly, and at the same time she shook her head violently in dissent. I did not understand at first. Then she went up to her husband, laid both her hands gently on his shoulders. 'But, Herwarth,' she objected, 'you haven't asked the gentleman if he has time now to look at your collection. ■ is near the lunch-hour now and you must rest for an hour after your meal. The doctor insists on it. Don't you think it would be better to show the gentleman all these things after lunch, and we shall all have some coffee together. And Anne-Marie will be here then. She knows it all so much better, and will be able to assist you.'

"And once again, before she had quite finished the words, she signed to me over his unsuspecting head. This time I understood. I knew that she wanted me to say that I could not see the collection immediately, and I soon discovered that I had a lunch appointment. It would be a pleasure and an honour to see his collection, but I would hardly be able to do so before three o'clock, but I would be very happy to come in then.

"The old man turned round, as angry as a child that has been deprived of its favourite toy. 'Of course,' he grunted, 'Berliners never have any time. But now you will have to make time, for

there are not merely three or five prints to see, but twenty-seven portfolios, each of a different master, and not one of them half empty. Very well, then, three o'clock. But you must be punctual, or we shall never get finished.'

"Again he extended his hand towards me in space. 'Look out. You will be glad—or angry with envy. And the more angry you are the better pleased I shall be. We collectors are like that—all for ourselves and nothing for the rest.' He shook my hand once more vigorously.

"The old lady accompanied me to the door. I had noticed that she was uneasy all the time. There was a kind of embarrassed anxiety about her. Now, just at the door, she stammered in a very dejected voice: 'Might I ask—might I ask if my daughter Anne-Marie may fetch you, before you come here? . . . ■ would be better for . . . for several reasons. . . . You will be lunching at your hotel, I suppose?'

"'Of course, I shall be delighted,' I said.

"And an hour later, just as I had finished my meal in the little dining-room in the hotel in the market square, an elderly spinster, very simply dressed, came in, looking round enquiringly. I went up to her, introduced myself, and said that I was ready to go with her at once to see the collection. She went suddenly red, and looking as perplexed and confused as her mother had done, she asked whether she might first say something to me. I saw at once that it would be a difficult task for her. Each time she tried to speak, the red mounted up to her forehead, and she fumbled with her dress. At last she began falteringly, and constantly falling into fresh confusion.

"'My mother sent me to you. . . . She has told me everything, and . . . we have a big favour to ask you. . . . We want to tell you, before you come to father. . . . Father will naturally want to show you his collection, and the collection . . . the collection . . . is no longer complete . . . some of the things are missing. Unfortunately, quite a lot in fact. . . .'

"Again she had to pause for breath. Then she suddenly looked at me, and said hastily:

"'I must speak openly to you. . . . You know how things are to-day. You will understand everything. . . . Father went totally blind after the war broke out. His sight had been affected before that; the excitement plunged him into darkness. He was

seventy-six, but he wanted to go out to France, and when the army did not sweep on as in 1870, he went into a terrible rage, and his eyes suffered. Otherwise he is still very active. Till recently he used to go walking for hours, even hunting, which he loves. Now his walking days are over, and the only joy he has left is his collection, which he sees every day. Or rather, he does not see it; he sees nothing at all now, but he takes all the portfolios out every afternoon, to feel the prints, at least, one after the other, always in the same order, which he has known off by heart for years. . . . Nothing else interests him now, and I have to read to him every day out of the paper about every sale of art, and the bigger the prices the more happy he is . . . because . . . that is the terrible thing about it. . . . Father has no idea at all about prices or anything nowadays. . . . He doesn't know that we have lost everything, and that his pension wouldn't keep us more than two days in the month. . . . On top of that, my sister's husband was killed, and she was left with four young children. . . . But father doesn't know about our financial difficulties. At first we stinted ourselves, more than before, but it was no use. Then we started selling things—of course we did not touch his collection. . . . We sold the little jewellery we had, but what did it amount to? Father had for years spent every penny he could put aside for buying his prints. Then one day there was nothing else . . . we did not know what to do . . . and then . . . then . . . mother and I sold a print. Father would not have allowed it. He doesn't know how bad things are. He has no idea how hard it is to smuggle in a bit of food. He doesn't even know that we have lost the war, and that Alsace and Lorraine have been evacuated. We don't read these things to him out of the paper, so that he shouldn't excite himself.

"There was one that was very expensive, a Rembrandt etching. The dealer offered us a lot for it, thousands of marks, and we hoped that would see us through for years. But you know how money melts these days. . . . We had put the whole of the balance in the bank. Yet in two months' time it was all gone. . . . So we had to sell another, and another, and the dealer always sent the money so late that it had lost its value. Then we tried auction sales, but they cheated us even more, though we fetched millions. . . . By the time the millions reached us they were worthless paper. And in that way the best things in the collection

gradually wandered away, just for the barest, scantiest necessities of life, and father doesn't suspect anything.

"That is why my mother was so frightened when you came. . . . For if he had opened the portfolios for you it would have all come out. We have replaced the prints we have sold with copies, or similar prints put into the old mounts, so that he can't tell the difference when he feels them. So long as he can feel and count them (he knows the order in which they go by heart), he is just as happy as when he was able to see them with open eyes.

"There is nobody in this little town to whom father has ever thought it worth while showing his treasures . . . and he is so fanatically in love with each single print that I believe it would break his heart if he had the slightest idea that everything that he has held in his hands has long since wandered away. You are the first man in all the years since the late Director of the Dresden Etching Department died, to whom he wants to show his portfolios. That is why I am asking you . . ."

"She suddenly lifted up her hands, and her eyes were wet and shining.

" . . . We are asking you. . . . Don't make him unhappy. . . . Us unhappy. . . . Don't destroy his last illusion. Help us to make him believe that all the prints he will be describing to you are still there. . . . He will not survive it if he stumbles on the truth. Perhaps we have wronged him, but we could not help ourselves. We must live. . . . And human lives, four orphan children, like my sister's, are more important than prints. . . . Nor till to-day have we deprived him of his joy. He is happy going through his portfolios every afternoon for three hours, talking to each print as if it were a human being. And to-day . . . to-day might be perhaps his happiest day. He has been waiting for years to be able to show his precious prints to someone who understands. . . . Please . . . please, I implore you with uplifted hands, do not destroy his happiness!"

"All this was said so movingly, that I am quite unable to convey the impression that ■ made on me. My God! A dealer sees plenty of these people who have been outrageously robbed, scurvily swindled by the inflation, whose precious heirlooms have been filched away from them for a slice of bread and butter—but here fate had played a special trick, and I was deeply moved. Of course, I pledged myself to keep quiet and to do my best.

" We went back together, and on the way I found out to my intense indignation with what childish sums these poor, unknowing women had been tricked.

" But that only strengthened my determination to help them as much as I could. We walked up the stairs, and we had hardly touched the bell before we heard the voice of the old man inside call out happily, breezily :

" ' Come in, come in ! ' The sensitive ear, usual to a blind man, had probably heard us walking up the stairs.

" ' Herwarth could not sleep a wink to-day. He was so impatient to be showing you his treasures,' the old lady said with a smile. A single glance at her daughter had reassured her about my attitude.

" The pile of portfolios was already laid out, waiting on the table, and the blind man had scarcely felt my hand, when he clutched my arm without any further greeting and pushed me down into a chair.

" ' There. Now we can start at once. There is a lot to see, and people from Berlin never have any time. This first portfolio here is Duerer, and as you will see, it is pretty well complete—each print finer than the one before. Now judge for yourself. Look at this.'

" He threw open the first sheet of the portfolio. ' The Great Horse.' He lifted out of the portfolio with the delicate care with which one touches something fragile, hardly laying his finger-tips on it, a mount, framed in which lay an empty, yellowed sheet of paper, and enraptured, he held up the worthless trash in front of him. He looked at it for several minutes, without actually seeing it, but he held up the empty sheet ecstatically, with his hand stretched at the level of his eye ; his whole face expressed magically the rapt gaze of one who sees. And into his eyes, his dead, rigid eyes, with their empty orbs, there came suddenly—was it the reflection of the paper, or a glow from within ?—a brightness, a knowing light.

" ' Well,' he said, with pride, ' have you ever seen a finer print ? How sharp, how clear each detail emerges—I have compared this print with the one in Dresden, but that looked very flat and dull against this. And what a pedigree it has ! Here '—he turned the print round, and pointed out with his finger nail several places on the blank sheet, finding the precise spot so

exactly, that I could not help looking to see if the marks were really there—'here you have the stamp of the Nagler Collection, here the Remy and Esdaile stamps; they never dreamed, these illustrious owners, that their print would one day be in this little room.'

"A cold shudder ran down my back to hear the unsuspecting man speak with such enthusiasm about an utterly blank sheet. It was fantastic to watch him indicate the very spot to a millimetre where in his imagination he saw the signs left by previous collectors. There was a lump in my throat. I could not think what to say in reply. But when I looked up in bewilderment, I saw the old woman trembling and holding up her hands to me in entreaty. So I pulled myself together, and began to play my part.

"'Amazing!' I stammered at last. 'A glorious print.' Instantly all his face beamed with pride. 'But that is nothing,' he cried triumphantly. 'You must see the "Melancholy," or the "Passion," an illustrious example, such as you can rarely find a second time of like quality. Look at it,' and his fingers moved again lightly over an imaginary representation. 'What freshness, what strength, what warmth of tone. Berlin would stand on its head for this, with all its big dealers and museum experts.'

"This went on triumphantly for two solid hours. I cannot describe to you how ghostly it was to examine with him these hundred or two hundred blank sheets of paper, or wretched reproductions, which in the memory of this pathetic, unsuspecting man were so real, however, that he made no slip in their order, describing and praising each in the most minute detail—this unseen collection that must long since have been scattered to all the winds, was for this blind man, this sadly deceived man, still complete, and the transport of his vision was so overpowering that I almost began to believe in it myself. Once only the danger seemed imminent of an awakening from the somnambulist certainty of his enthusiasm. He had praised the sharpness of the printing of the Rembrandt 'Antiope' (a proof print that must have been worth a fabulous sum) and his sensitive finger was tracing the line of the printing, without finding the right depth in the substituted sheet. A shadow suddenly appeared on his forehead. His voice faltered. 'But that is, that is the "Antiope"?' he muttered a little puzzled.

"I quickly snatched the sheet out of his hands and enthusiastically described every detail of the etching, which was visible to me, too. The blind man's face cleared again. And the more I praised it, the more this gnarled, doddering old man developed a jovial cordiality, a hearty, honest joy.

" 'Here is a man who understands something,' he said, turning triumphantly to his family. 'At last, at last, a man who can tell you what my prints are worth. You always distrusted me and abused me, because I sank everything I had into my collection. It is true. For sixty years, no beer, no wine, no tobacco, no travelling, no theatres, no books, but always saving and scraping for these prints. But one day you will see, when I am gone—you will be rich, richer than anyone in the town, as rich as the richest people in Dresden. Then you will be thankful that I have been such a fool. But as long as I am alive, not a single print may leave this house—you must carry me out first, and only then, my collection.'

"And he drew his hand caressingly over the despoiled portfolios, as if they were living things—it was horrifying, and yet intensely moving, for in all the years of the war I had never seen such pure spirituality in a German face. Beside him stood his womenfolk, strangely reminiscent of the figures on the etchings of German masters who have come to the grave of their Saviour and stand beside the open, empty grave with an expression of awe and fear mingled with ecstatic faith and joy on their faces. So these two elderly, middle-class women beamed at the childish, soulful joy of the old man, half laughing, half weeping, a sight such as I had never before experienced in so moving a way. But the old man could not tire of hearing me praise his prints. He kept on turning over the cases, thirstily drinking in every word. It was a relief when the lying cases were at last pushed aside, and he had to give up the table reluctantly for coffee. Yet what was my guilty relief compared with the swelling, tumultuous joy of this man who seemed to have become thirty years younger! He related thousands of anecdotes about his purchases and his finds; rejecting all assistance he kept getting up to bring out another print and then another; he was intoxicated as if with wine. When I finally said that I must go, he looked frightened, and pouted like a child, stamped his foot petulantly. I couldn't go yet. I hadn't seen half the collection. And his womenfolk

found it a hard task to persuade him that he must not keep me any longer, or else I would lose my train.

"When he had at last got out of his tantrum and had reconciled himself to my going and I was on the point of leaving, his voice grew very gentle. He seized both my hands, and caressed them with all a blind man's power of expressing feeling, stroking them with his fingers right up to the wrists, as if they wanted to know more of me, and convey to me more affection than words could do. 'You have made me very, very happy,' he began with such emotion that I shall never be able to forget it. 'It was an act of kindness. At last, at last, I was able again to look through my beloved prints with a man who understands. I shall not let it go unrewarded. My wife is here as witness. I shall add a codicil to my will that the sale of my collection is to be entrusted to your firm. You shall have the honour of looking after this priceless treasure'—placing his hand affectionately on the despoiled cases—'till the day it is dispersed all over the world. Only promise me that you will issue a beautiful catalogue. That will be my tombstone. I need no better.'

"I looked at his wife and daughter. They were supporting each other, and occasionally a tremor passed from one to the other as if they were one body that shook in unison. I felt uncomfortable hearing this blind man, unconscious of his loss, assign to me the disposal of his long-since-dispersed collection, as if it were something precious. I gave him a solemn promise that I could never carry out. His dead eye-sockets again lighted up. I sensed his yearning to feel me. I sensed it in his tenderness, in the affectionate grasp of his finger that held mine gratefully.

"The women accompanied me to the door. They did not dare to speak, for his hearing was so acute that he would have heard every word, but their faces beamed with gratitude, and there were tears in their eyes as they looked at me. I felt stunned as I groped my way down the stairs. The fact was that I felt ashamed. I had come like the angel in the fairy tale into a poor home, had given a blind man his sight for an hour, helping to keep up a pious deception, I who had in reality come there only as a sordid business man to deprive someone by artifice of a few costly prints. But I took away with me much more. I had again come into contact with real enthusiasm in our dull and joyless time, an overpowering ecstasy given entirely to the service of art, such as people to-day

seem to have completely lost. I felt sad and filled with awe, though I still felt ashamed, without really knowing why.

“ As soon as I got into the street, I heard a window open above, and someone called my name. It was the old man, who would not forgo the chance of turning his blind eyes in the direction in which he supposed I was going. He leaned so far out of the window, that the two women had to hold him back carefully. He waved his handkerchief and shouted : ‘ Happy journey ! ’ and his voice sounded jolly and fresh like that of a schoolboy. It was an unforgettable sight—the happy face of the white-haired old man in the window, high above all the sullen-faced, preoccupied people in the street, gently lifted out of the world of harsh reality, borne aloft on the white cloud of a happy delusion. And I thought once more of that true saying—I think it was Goethe who said it—‘ Collectors are lucky people.’ ”

## THE HUNTER GRACCHUS

*By* FRANZ KAFKA

*Translated by* JOSEPH LEFTWICH

Franz Kafka, born in Prague, 1883, died 1924. Doctor of Law, Prague. His first volume of short stories appeared in 1913. A great and remarkable figure in world-literature. Published several novels, three posthumously. Several works left at his death still await publication. "The Death of the Hunter Gracchus," is from a posthumously-published volume of stories, "The Building of the Chinese Wall."

In his last years he devoted himself to Hebrew and the Talmud, and planned to settle in Palestine. In a joint introduction to "The Building of the Chinese Wall," Thomas Mann, Heinrich Mann, Franz Werfel, André Gide and several other famous writers, speak of Kafka as "a master-stylist and a master of the short story, a novelist to be compared only with the very greatest, and an inexorable moulder and interpreter of our time."

TWO boys sat on the wall of the quay and played dice. A man was reading a newspaper on the steps of a monument, in the shadow of the sword-brandishing hero. A girl at the well was filling her tub with water. A fruitseller lay beside his scales, and looked out to sea. Far inside the tavern two men were seen through the empty spaces in door and windows drinking wine. The host sat more to the front, at a table, dozing. A barge skimmed lightly, as if carried upon the waters, into the little port. A man wearing a blue smock landed, and hauled the ropes through the quayside rings. Two other men, in dark coats with silver buttons, carried behind the boatman a bier, on which, under a large, flowered, fringed silk cloth, there obviously lay a man.

Nobody on the quay took any notice of the new arrivals. Even when they set down the bier to wait for the boatman nobody came up. Nobody questioned them, nobody looked at them any closer.

The leader was detained a little longer by a woman, who, with a child at her breast and with dishevelled hair, showed herself

now on deck. Then he came along, and pointed to a yellowish, two-storeyed house that rose on the left, alongside the water. The bearers took up their load and bore it through the low but slender-columned gate. A little boy opened a window, was just in time to see the troop disappear into the house, and hastily shut the window again. The gate, too, was closed now. It was carefully constructed of black oak.

A swarm of doves that had till now been flying round the clock tower, now came down in front of the house. They collected outside the gate as if their food were stored inside. One flew up to the first storey and pecked at the window-pane. They were light-coloured, well-nourished, vivacious birds. The woman with a great sweep of her arm threw them grains of corn from the barge. They picked them up, and flew over to the woman.

A man wearing a silk hat, with a black band round it, came along one of the narrow precipitous streets that led to the harbour. He looked round carefully. Everything worried him. The sight of refuse lying in a corner made him frown. Some fruit peel lay on the steps of the monument. He dislodged it in passing with his stick. He knocked at the door of the house. At the same moment he took off his silk hat and held it in his black-gloved hand. The door was opened at once. About fifty small boys stood in file in the long entrance hall and bowed.

The boatman came down the stairs, welcomed the gentleman and conducted him upstairs. On the first floor he took him through the courtyard surrounded by airily-constructed, ornamental loggias, and with the boys following at a respectful distance, they both entered a large, cool chamber at the back of the house, against which there was no longer a house to be seen, but only a bare, grey-black wall of rock.

The bearers were busy setting down and lighting several large candles at the head of the bier, but no light resulted. Only the shadows that had previously been at rest, started up and flickered on the walls. The cloth on the bier had been thrown back. A man lay there with hair and beard grown into a wild tangle, with bronzed skin, something like a hunter. He lay motionless, apparently not breathing, with eyes closed. Yet only the surroundings suggested that it might be a dead man.

The gentleman stepped up to the bier, placed his hand on the forehead of the man who lay there, then he knelt down and

prayed. The boatman nodded to the bearers, who left the room, drove away the boys who had collected outside, and locked the door. Even this silence did not suffice for the gentleman. He glanced towards the boatman, who grasped his meaning, and went out through a side door into the adjoining room. Immediately the man on the bier opened his eyes, turned his face with a pained smile towards the gentleman, and said : " Who are you ? "

The gentleman rose without any further surprise from his kneeling position, and answered : " The Mayor of Riva."

The man on the bier nodded, stretched out a feeble arm, and pointed to a seat, and when the Mayor had accepted his invitation, said :

" I knew it, Mr. Mayor, but at first I always forget everything, everything goes round in me. And it is better to ask, even if I know everything. You probably know, too, that I am the hunter Gracchus."

" Of course," said the Mayor. " I was told during the night that you were coming. We had long been asleep. About midnight my wife cried : ' Salvator '—that is my name—' look at the dove at the window.' It was really a dove, but as big as a hen. It flew up to me, and whispered in my ear : ' The dead hunter Gracchus is coming to-morrow. Receive him in the name of the town.' "

The hunter nodded, and drew the tip of his tongue between his lips. " Yes, the doves fly on in advance of me. But do you think, Mr. Mayor, that I shall remain in Riva ? "

" I can't say yet," replied the Mayor. " Are you dead ? "

" Yes," said the hunter, " as you can see. Many years ago, it must have been ever so many years ago, I fell in the Schwarzwald—that is in Germany—from a crag, while I was following a chamois. Since then I am dead."

" But you still live, as well," said the Mayor.

" To a certain extent," said the hunter. " To a certain extent, I live, as well. My death-boat missed its voyage. A turn in the wrong direction by the steersman, a momentary inattention on the part of the leader, a diversion through my beautiful native land, I don't know what it was ; I only know that since then my boat travels the earthly waters. Thus I, who would live only in my own mountains, journey after my death through all the countries of the earth."

"And you have no part in the hereafter?" asked the Mayor with furrowed brow.

"I am always," answered the hunter, "on the great stairway that leads up there. I keep moving about on this endless stairway, now above, now below, now to the right, now to the left, always in motion. The hunter has become a butterfly. Don't laugh."

"I am not laughing," the Mayor protested.

"Very sensible," said the hunter. "I am constantly in motion. If I take the upmost swing and the gate already shines in front of me, I awake again down below in my old tedious boat stuck in some earthly water. The basic error of my one-time dying taunts me in my cabin. Julia, the wife of the boatman, knocks and brings to my bier the morning drink of the country along whose coast we happen to be cruising. I lie on a plank bed—it is no pleasure to look at me—wearing a dirty shroud, hair and beard tangled, grey and black inextricably mingled, my limbs are covered with a big silk, flowered woman's shawl. A candle stands at my head and sheds its light on me. On the wall facing me hangs a little picture, a bushman apparently, pointing his spear at me, and taking cover behind a magnificently-painted shield. One comes across all sorts of idiotic things on board a ship, but this is one of the most idiotic. Otherwise my wooden cage is empty. Through a hole in the side-wall I get the warm air of the southern night, and I hear the water beat against the old boat.

"Here I lie since the day when I, still the living Gracchus, followed a chamois in my native Schwarzwald, and fell. Everything went according to rule. I hunted, I fell, I bled, died, and this barge was to carry me across to the other side. I still recall how happily I stretched myself for the first time on this plank bed. Never had the mountains heard such song from me as then these four walls.

"I had lived gladly, I died gladly. Before I went on board, I threw away happily my pack, my rifle, my wallet, my hunting weapons, that I had always carried with pride, and I slipped into my shroud like a girl into her wedding dress. I lay here and waited. Then the misfortune happened."

"An unhappy fate," said the Mayor, his hand lifted defensively. "And you are not to blame?"

"Not a bit," said the hunter. "I was a hunter. Is there any wrong in that? I was called to be a hunter in the Schwarzwald, where at that time there were still wolves. I lay in wait, shot, hit, took off the pelt. Was there any wrong in that? My work was blessed. 'The great hunter of the Schwarzwald' was my name. ■ there any wrong in that?"

"I am not qualified to decide that," said the Mayor, "but there doesn't seem to be anything wrong in that. But whose fault is it?"

"The boatman's," said the hunter. "No one will read what I am writing here, no one will come to help me. If it were set as a task to help me, every door and every window in every house would remain locked, everybody would stay on in bed, and pull the bedclothes over his head, the whole world one vast doss-house. That is good sense, for nobody knows about me, and if they knew about me, they wouldn't know where I am, and if they knew where I am, they wouldn't know how ■ keep me there, and they wouldn't know how to help me. The idea of wanting to help me is a disease, and must be cured in bed.

"I know that, and so I do not shout for help, except when ■ odd moments—uncontrolled as I am, as ■ present—I think about it very intensely. But it is enough to drive such thought out of my mind if I look round, and realise where I am, and—I am well able ■ make this claim—dwelling for centuries."

"Extraordinary," said the Mayor, "extraordinary. Now tell me, are you thinking of remaining in Riva?"

"I don't remember," said the hunter with a smile, and to retrieve the bantering tone laid his hand on the knee of the Mayor. "I am here. More than that I do not know. More than that I cannot do. My bark has no rudder, it travels with the wind that blows in the nethermost regions of death."

# DEATH IS A PASSING WEAKNESS

By MAX BROD

*Translated by* JOSEPH LEFTWICH

Max Brod, born in Prague in 1884. Outstanding novelist and essayist. Holds a high place also as poet and dramatist. Member of Editorial Board of "Prager Tagblatt." One of the founders of the Jewish National Council in Prague. Intensely interested in Jewish life and problems. Principal works: "Tycho Brahe's Road to God," "A Queen Esther," "The Promised Land," "Reubeni, King of the Jews." Has also published a two-volume work, "Heathenism, Christianity, Judaism." Brod selected the following story for this volume.

THE excursion party of Danish students entered the Psychiatric clinic.

Inspector Roty received them. Conducted them along narrow corridors. Several inmates of the institution went by with pails and brooms, wearing dark blue gowns that fell to their ankles. The Inspector conducted the students into the reception room of Professor Hoerberlein. They were to wait there a bit while he went off to find the Professor.

It was a fine, spacious room, with arm-chairs, panelled walls, shelves of books. The open windows gave a view of the rich green of the garden of the lunatic asylum.

The foreign students, six in number, had only just looked round and settled themselves comfortably, when a gaunt man with a noticeably high, beautifully-vaulted forehead, entered, nervously tugging at his grey, pointed beard. "Professor Jastrau," he announced himself at the door, and bowed. At the sound of the famous name the Danish students sprang up, respectfully, out of their arm-chairs.

"Don't disturb yourselves," said Professor Jastrau, with weary, slightly nonchalant politeness. He looked round. "My colleague Hoerberlein is taking his time." There was a little severity in his glance, yet even now he had not lost the charming non-chalance, or rather distrainess in each of his smooth, easy gestures,

and in his gentle voice. "We shall not start the round before my colleague arrives." And he offered them cigarettes out of a box on the table.

"And where have you been till now, gentlemen? What have you seen?" the Professor asked chattily.

The spokesman of the party rose again, almost as soon as he had sat down. "Berlin, Breslau——"

"Please, please"—smiled Professor Jastrau, motioning his guest back into his seat from where he stood afar off, with a gracious, suggestive gesture, his delicate, white hand, in which he held his cigarette, sweeping over the dark writing-table.

He was a man of the world, such as one meets rarely among German university professors, but when one does, one finds them a fascinating type, with clear, wise, beaming eyes. The Professor's easy friendliness stood out in contrast to the students' Nordic stiff and awkward formality. "Well, and what else have you seen?"

"We inspected the distinguished University in Goettingen. And now we are studying the model institutions here."

"But they are all the same."

Axel Mundt, student from Copenhagen, flushed, shrank back. "If the Professor will permit me—one is always learning something new and valuable. Here, for example, we instantly noticed," he turned to his companions as if to assure himself of their agreement, "that you Professors wear the same attire as the patients. A wise idea. These people ought not to be made self-conscious, the distinction between doctor and patient should not be unnecessarily emphasised."

For a fleeting fraction of a second, and looking very much distraught, the Professor glanced down at his blue gown, then with an embarrassed smile he again held his hearers' eyes. "Well, if you call that learning something—this frippery! No, no, gentlemen. If you want to find something really new you must go further . . . to the South of France, for instance. To Arles, in the Provence. The fact is that I never knew that there is an ancient university at Arles. And people have not heard of anything extraordinary that has been done there. You gentlemen haven't either, have you? One may say that there is only a small research institute there, attached to the ancient provincial museum. Or to be more exact, one single Professor. . . . But a very singular

scientific worker. Professor Debaudy. Never heard of him? Well, I can tell you about him. My colleague Hoeberlein appears to be most unpunctual to-day."

The Professor lighted another cigarette and puffed at it hastily. He turned his head, as if intentionally, away from the door, although that involved having some of the students at his back. On his face lay the green reflection of the garden.

"As I was saying, I had never before heard of this University. I was therefore astounded when I found a laboratory, close to the rooms containing the antiquities collection of the Museum (which, incidentally, is in a more neglected condition than the most vivid imagination can picture). Professor Debaudy sat there, in a semi-dark, dust-laden, dirty corner-room, beside an Egyptian mummy, with the swathings undone, reading aloud articulation exercises, sentences containing only 'A' sounds. Then such in which other vowels predominated—similar to the exercises which actors use in studying elocution. I did not want to disturb the famous psychiatrist, whose writings I have studied with great profit, but my boots had creaked. He noticed me, and we exchanged greetings. We had both recognised each other from photographs in scientific journals. After the first few words, there was a certain embarrassment. More than that—I felt that Debaudy was getting annoyed, and would have liked to have me out of the room. I was overcome by a queer, aching curiosity, and I approached closer, though he tried to stop me with rather uncertain gestures, and wanted to drive me away. 'What are you doing there, my friend?' I asked less gently than I had intended. We both looked into the open mummy-case. The dead person lay there, shrunk and withered, so that the earth-brown body seemed to be that of a boy, though it was probably that of a grown man. The skin was like parchment, stretched taut to the verge of snapping, over the protruding bones. Debaudy looked up with a baleful glance. 'I am engaged in hygiene of the dead,' he said. Do you gentlemen want to hear any more?"

The Danish students did not answer. They did not even dare to clear their throats; they were listening so attentively. Professor Jastrau smiled at them, pleased at the spell exercised by his authority. Then he turned his ardent, thought-seared face again to the light from the garden—and the deep green that blanched

his cheeks and at the same time strangely accentuated his eye-sockets, accorded in spectral, death-like fashion with what he went on to relate :

“ ‘ Hygiene of the dead,’ said Debaudy, and went on : ‘ The Egyptians knew the art. But other peoples know it, too, the Maoris, the inhabitants of the Marquesas. Only we have lost this ancient wisdom, that the dead—are not dead. That they must only be looked after and tended. And that then, with proper but laborious treatment, they attain to a condition which, indeed, cannot be termed life, at least, not according to our present conceptions, but which is not death, either. What we with inexactitude call death, has in my investigations always revealed itself as only a passing weakness. Admittedly doing severe damage to the system, but not incurable, as we, in our impatience believe, packing our dead away like cattle, burying them. I believe that there is something in us that rebels against this brutal burial. When someone we love dies—have you not observed that one feels a protest, that every clod, every stone that falls into the grave, seems an injustice committed against the assumed dead ? Well, those are, of course, only subjective feelings, which have no relation to science. And dreams, too, in which the supposed dead appear, naturally do not count from this aspect. But experiments, experiments, my dear sir. I tell you that death can be cured. I can cure death. In a way . . . *cum grano salis*, very clearly. One thing is to me indubitable—the body of a dead person can recover. I have even healed wounds, post mortem, even cancer. We must not stop treatment when the person dies. Nor can we expect him afterwards, even with expert treatment, to be able with nothing further, to communicate with us in the accustomed way. You throw your dead into a hole, so many feet underground, pah ! And then you want him, when he revives, to understand what is said to him, even himself to speak. You expect too much. The Egyptians, of course, who embalmed their dead, placing them, after they were cleansed of all contamination, in airy caves in the rocks, in dry, healthy air-passages.’ . . . ”

Professor Jastrau, visibly moved by his narration, stood at the garden window, drawing deep breaths of the wind agitated by the swaying treetops. And his hearers, spell-bound, also inhaled deeply, as if they had to pump charnel-house air out of their lungs.

"Now, for the conclusion," said Professor Jastrau, turning to face the students again, his voice noticeably dry and professional. "Professor Debaudy showed me a second mummy. It was behind curtains, in a big glass case, in a sitting posture. 'Here is a better pupil,' he introduced me, with a contemptuous gesture in the direction of the recumbent mummy. Then he crawled into the glass case, seated himself on a second chair, standing there in readiness, and started whispering in the mummy's ear. 'Listen, he ■ answering.' But I did not hear anything, or very little. A slight crackling was all. Certainly no recognisable sound. And the crackling, too, was probably caused by Debaudy stroking the seated mummy affectionately and reverently with his hand, giving rise to the fear that it might crumble altogether. 'Will you publish your work soon?' I interrupted. 'I have not read anything at all about these inquiries of yours, and you have been engaged in them for——' 'Thirty-five years,' he completed my sentence. 'And not a word published?'

" 'I am not one of those who rush into publicity prematurely with sensational discoveries. I despise those professors who go round bluffing about rejuvenation methods and the like. I am not concerned with money and fame, but to reveal the complex biological associations. As for the popularising of my work, I leave that to others. That is not my affair!'

"I was furious. I understood for the first time at that moment what the poet—I think it was Rimbaud—meant when he said that science is 'too slow.' When the Professor looked at me venomously I lost control.

" 'But don't you realise that this is not a question of yourself and your private affairs? You may be able to wait, but humanity can't. At this time, soon after the War, with its millions of dead! Don't you see, if your work is really sound and you are on the track of the truth, that it changes the entire appearance of the world. That the dead, as you say, need only expert attention. . . .'

"It seemed as if shutters had suddenly been clamped down over Debaudy's glance.

" 'On the contrary. The War appears from the point of view of my researches even more terrible than is generally assumed. My method applies only to bodies that are well preserved. But our mines and our grenades have blown them into a thousand fragments. That doesn't allow for any resurrection. Just

resurrection is powerless against the crematorium. Neither the doctor nor God can help. Shall I tell mankind that it has deprived the fallen, the "unknown" and the known soldiers alike, not merely of a few years, but of eternal life ?

"Certainly, and the more quickly for that reason, in order to prevent any more crimes of this kind."

"Gentlemen," Jastrau jumped suddenly out of his narration as from behind a concealment. "I never realised more horribly the responsibility that lies upon us men of science. Exact filigree work till the end, or the intuition of genius, with anticipatory divination, though perhaps with still inadequate foundation for useful application. Who would decide ? Will you understand me, gentlemen," Jastrau went on, trembling, "when I admit to you that the struggle that now broke out between Debaudy and me . . . I want you to understand me. I pleaded with him, I demanded, that he should publish his results immediately, not postpone the practical application for another minute. In his frigid tones as he replied there was not only the obtuseness of the scholar, but something worse—contempt of humanity, even hatred of the human kind. Yet I would not have yielded to the terrible temptation. But at this moment, as I lay on my knees before him—Yes, I had gone so far as to lie on my knees before him—someone entered. His assistant. Reported something. The Professor went into the next room, that was in complete darkness. I followed. I saw nothing yet. But the messenger reported that he had just opened a grave and removed the coffin of the dead person buried yesterday—the name was indistinct. Now I could see. The coffin lay here, in the room, open. A girl, pallid, with gleaming, auburn hair. The lips convulsed, and in the open eyes such reproach, such reproach that this had been done to her—the reproach of the narrow, dark grave in her just awakened, scarcely comprehending eyes. ■ infuriated me. That this should have to go on happening always, over and over again, and that this man who was able to prevent it should keep silent ! And I shot Debaudy. Calm yourselves, gentlemen," Jastrau cried out, loudly now for the first time, to the students, who, affrighted by the increasingly confused tale, and perhaps already suspecting something, were approaching the writing-table and coming closer. "Calm yourselves. I have received my punishment. I found that Debaudy's will stipulated cremation. I could not

prevent it. He was burnt to ashes. No art will resurrect him, and his discovery has gone with him. His writings, who can decipher them ? " . . .

Jastrau pulled out of the sleeves of his blue gown some scraps of paper, old newspapers, bits of paper bags, which he spread out on the writing table.

Professor Hoerberlein stepped into the room, red-cheeked, massive. " Excuse me, gentlemen. . . . Why, Klas, have you got in here again ? What is this idea of yours ? " He stormed at the supposed Professor Jastrau, who did not budge from the writing-table. " Has he been jabbering to you, gentlemen ? Where is Inspector Roty ? "

He rang. " This patient often presents himself as Professor Jastrau, our Chief Professor. Or as Professor Debaudy. He has never been in France. Was attaché at an Embassy here. Have you never heard of the suicide of a beautiful, auburn-haired dancer, Diana Hyams ? He was her lover. Ever since that time he has had these macabre delusions. Well, there you are at last, Roty. Why do you allow Klas to go wandering about the corridors, molesting visitors ? Shall we do the round, gentlemen ? You have already seen one of our most interesting cases."

As the visitors were about to leave the room, Inspector Roty stepped up to Klas. " My cigarettes ! " Professor Hoerberlein suddenly cried. The Inspector tore the box out of the patient's hand. Jastrau-Klas had till now retained his dignity. But this movement thrust him down to the level of a beast. Suddenly he was quite tiny and inevident. Student Axel Mundt, of Copenhagen, a kindly youth, who saw it as he was passing through the door, had tears in his eyes.

## MENDEL HIRSCH

By LION FEUCHTWANGER

*Translated by WILLA and EDWIN MUIR*

Lion Feuchtwanger, born, 1884, in Munich. Jumped into international fame with his "Jew Suss," following it up with his "Ugly Duchess," "Success" and "Josephus" which have established him as one of the leading novelists of the day. He has an amazing sense of power, and of historical portraiture. He has made an attempt to complete Heine's unfinished masterpiece "The Rabbi of Bacharach." Feuchtwanger is at present living in Switzerland, being barred from Germany for his outspoken criticism of the Hitler Government.

### I

A TINY, fat, fidgety man stood before Margarete. He was very obsequious, and spoke in a guttural voice. His name was Mendel Hirsch, and he was a Jew. During the persecution of the Brothers Armleder he had fled from Bavarian soil to Regensburg, where the burgesses had protected him. Out of the hundred and twenty-seven communities in which the Jews had been butchered at this time, he was one of the few people who had escaped. Now he carried a safe-conduct from the Emperor, and for prudence one too from the rival Emperor Karl.

The Duchess had never seen a living Jew at close quarters. Attentive, slightly repelled, she regarded the thickset man, who in his brown cloak and peaked hat strutted up and down, pouring out a stream of guttural words, striking droll attitudes. So this was how they looked, these people who defiled the sacrament and cruelly tortured innocent children: the race who were cursed by God and who had crucified God. She had often heard of the strange, uncanny people, and had not long ago—on the occasion of the last Jewish massacre—discussed them exhaustively with Abbot Johannes of Viktring. He had neither approved nor condemned the persecutions. That ancient curse which their own lips had called down was being fulfilled on this stricken

people. "His blood be on us and on our children!" The Abbot shrugged his shoulders, and cited an ancient classic :

"Wretch that I am, my fears are great, for great my offences."

Margarete found this solution a little too simple. Of course a man who fanned one of these persecutions into flame might be acting from zeal in the cause of God. Perhaps. It was certain that he gained much by it. For was there a more approved way of getting rid of Jewish creditors than by killing them? Why, if it was expedient and fitting to exterminate them, did just the wisest princes, spiritual and temporal, use their influence in favour of them? The laws of Friedrich II of Hohenstaufen, the bulls of the fourth Innocent, betrayed an outlook very different from the valiant abbot's. And the reigning Pope Clement—he was her enemy, but diabolically clever. Why did he stand in front of them so solidly and protectingly with his bulls and severe ordinances?

She looked at the little man who gesticulated restlessly before her. He told of the sufferings he had gone through. How they had driven his people into their houses of worship and burned them, how they had stuck others in sacks weighed down with stones and miserably drowned them in the Rhine, how they had mutilated, tortured and strangled them, defiled women before the eyes of their pinioned husbands, and hung their children, spitted on spears, like flags, out of the windows of burning houses. He related this hurriedly, with many a graphic detail and gesture. His vivid guttural words stumbled over one another; he smiled apologetically, was accusing, resigned, strewn his narrative with jesting phrases, called on God, ran his fingers nervously through his discoloured beard, shook his head. The Duchess heard him in silence: Herr von Schenna slouched in a corner, awkward and ungainly, and regarded attentively the zealous, odd-looking little man. Mendel Hirsch begged to be allowed to settle in Bozen. He was on his way to Leghorn to some of his co-religionists. But just now at the sight of the flourishing cities and markets of Tyrol it had occurred to him that here was a better and newer field. "The carrying trade, Your Grace!" he said. "The carrying trade! The fairs! The markets! The great routes from Lombardy to Germany, and from the Slavonic countries to the Roman used to pass through

here. Why should Trent, Bozen, Riva, Hall, Innsbruck, Sterzing and Meran be less than Augsburg and Strassburg?" The Bishops of Brixen and Trent were already inclined to give protection and privileges to the Jews. With the gracious permission of the Princess he would soon make trade flourish here. Bring money into the country, much money, big money. He could dispose of capital to any extent they liked. Gave more liberal terms than the gentlemen in Venice and Florence. He would export wine, oil, wood: import silk, furs, swords, Spanish wool, jewels, Moorish gold-work; pelts from the Eastern Slavonic states, above all, slaves, too. They were not needed here on the land? There were sufficient serfs? No? No. But then glass, that would be needed, Sicilian glass; he had an excellent connection. And coloured fabrics, of course, would be needed. And cinnamon, pepper, spices. He would soon arrange all that. They had only to let him arrange it all.

Margarete said she would take his request into consideration. When he was gone she talked it over with Schenna. He was greatly attracted by the Jew's projects. Of course they should let him settle, and try to keep him. He was of the new age; he would bring life into the country. At the tournament, certainly, Herr Mendel Hirsch would not make much of a figure; the barons, even the burghers, would frown on him. But just because of their lazy arrogance the indolent populace should have this mobile flea of a man dropped down their back.

So the Jew Mendel Hirsch came to Bozen. He came with a swarm of sons, daughters, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, grandchildren; there were three babes at the breast and an aged, mumbling grandmother. Almond-eyed, nimble-footed, talkative, they thronged the streets of Bozen, regarded the bright, stately houses, walls, gates, squares, people; appraised them, judged them with quick decided words and gestures.

It could not be said that the Bozen burghers took up the Jew Mendel Hirsch with enthusiasm. On the contrary the Margrave—who like his father the Emperor prized the Jews and showed them favour as promoters of prosperity in the towns—had first to make his wishes strictly known before Hirsch was even accorded shelter. And even then they treated him with the utmost surliness and suspicion; called the children from the street when he went by, wiped their sleeves if they brushed his, shouted curses

and insults after him, pelted him with mud when his back was turned. The fat, active, little man went on as if he saw or heard nothing, wiped off the mud when it struck him, smiled, ran his fingers through his discoloured beard. If they carried it too far, he would shake his head and say : " Now, now ! " He always remained obsequious, and after being turned away came back again. He bought a house for himself, another, a third. Wares arrived for him, piled themselves up, of all kinds, beautiful, in an abundance such as they had never seen, not too dear. He bought whatever was offered, estimated it quickly and exactly, always had money, and paid cash. The resident tradespeople made wry faces ; the other burghers got used to the Jew, cursed him still perhaps, but more out of habit than conviction.

When Mendel Hirsch had anything particularly fine and new to sell, fabrics, furs, jewels, he brought them first to the Duchess and Herr von Schenna. Both enjoyed talking with the widely-travelled man, who knew routes, goods, men and affairs so well, and saw them from such a different and such an unusual angle. When in serious conversation big words were used he made a wry face ; for knighthood, tourneys, banners and such things he had a good-natured, jeering contempt, which captivated and exhilarated Schenna. He said : " Why always rattle a sword and be in the right ? A little reasonableness and everything goes better." He became nervous and anxious at the sight of lances, spears and armour. Once when he was summoned by the Duchess he did not come, because there were soldiers about the roads. " He is a coward," said Margarete.

" Of course he is," said Herr von Schenna. " At best he would only cut himself with a sword. But he goes about alone and unarmed among people who hate him, and his only armour is the Margrave's safe-conduct."

Margarete learned that every evening he read out of his intricate Hebraic books and taught them to his children. She heard of his strange customs, of the prayer-mantle, the phylacteries, the special food. She asked him for details. He evaded her politely and firmly. This pleased Margarete. He was ugly and different. He wore a mask. She was the Maultasch, he the Jew.

Little by little more Jews came into the country. To Innsbruck, Hall, Meran, Brixen, Trent, Rovereto ; all with a horde of

almond-eyed children ; about twenty families. Money flowed in, the towns became greater, more luxurious, the streets better ; new strange fabrics, fruits, spices, wares, poured in. The mountain land lived more richly, more comfortably.

All week from early morning till deep in the night the Jews pushed their business. No affair was too small for them ; they would wait for hours, indefatigable, for anything. They accepted every humiliation, bent before it, and when someone pushed them out of his way or spat on them, they did not defend themselves. But on Friday evening they closed themselves within their houses, and while their Sabbath lasted they would give heed to nobody, not even to the greatest noblemen, nor for the sake of the most important transactions. The people stood before their barred doors, threatening : " There they're at their witchcraft and cursed trade. Wizardry, impious, damned, black arts." But the Jews did not let the threats bother them, and kept the doors and windows firmly closed.

On this day Mendel Hirsch was accustomed to kindle a great many festal lights, and exchange the brown cloak and the peaked hat for a beautiful robe of old cloth and a splendid cap ; his wife, his daughters and daughters-in-law too attired themselves with splendour. Then in his ugly guttural voice he sang psalms and prayers and his children sang along with him. He went and sat about in his house, ate well, drank well, rejoiced in his children and his wealth. Read out an extract from the Word, accompanied it with ingenious exposition, applied it to the events of the day. The house glittered with ornaments and was fragrant with costly perfumes. He laid his hand on his children's heads and blessed them, praying that they might be as Manasseh and as Ephraim. He took his ease in his house, stroked his beard, nodded his head, and said : " On Sabbath all the children of Israel are princes' children."

The Margrave said to Margarete : " It is good that the Jews have settled in the country. They bring money in, make things stir. All the same there is good enough reason for the people not standing them. There's that Jew Mendel Hirsch. He has no Church, no vestige of religion ! He's worse than a heathen, or a brute beast."

Herr von Teck said in his discordant voice : " The most offensive thing of all is that a creature like that has no sense of

dignity. How he crawls ! How he fawns like a dog ! Vermin ! Lice ! ”

Margarete was silent. “ He is the Jew,” she thought. “ I am the Maultasch.”

## II

Agnes of Taufers-Flavon came seldom to her Tyrolean estates. Her younger sister had been married meanwhile to a lord of Castelbarco, a man very suspect politically, who played off against each other the Bishop of Trent, certain Italian city magnates and the Tyrolean court, and for the rest possessed enormously rich domains and privileges. Agnes travelled a great deal, living now with her elderly sister in Bavaria, now with the younger one in Italy. After Duke Johann had been driven out she had not been further troubled ; on all questions which might have caused any dispute between her and the authorities, she advised her officials, shrewdly, to give way before a dispute could arise. She did not go to court oftener than propriety demanded and carefully avoided any appearance of importunity.

She was now of a disturbing, conscious, almost disquieting beauty. In Italy men laid cities and principalities at her feet, killed themselves for her ; even the boorish Bavarians clicked their tongues, smacked their thighs and declared : Yes, one would lick the dust and commit stupidities for her. She walked amiably with a tiny ambiguous smile through the homage, the combats, the suicides.

If she appeared seldom at the Tyrolean court, yet she showed wherever she was, the most burning interest in Tyrolean affairs. With parted lips she listened greedily to accounts of Margarete's activities. Her measures against the nobility, for the cities, for the Jews, the defence of the castle against the Luxemburgers ; every tiny detail of Margarete's life Agnes had reported to her and repeated, on her request, again and again. She never interposed with a word meantime, or even with a gesture. If one demanded an opinion of her she turned the question aside, and, with a smile, made some trivial remark.

She loved to show herself to the people. She was arrogant ; she never responded to their greetings. She never gave money to any of the benevolent institutions in the villages and towns ;

the peasants on her estates, too, were badly treated. Nevertheless, the people loved to look at her. They stood in her way when she passed, admired her, cheered her, loved her.

Often she received a visit from Messer Artese of Florence. Agnes lived very prodigally ; she needed ever and again the help of the insignificant Florentine banker, who bowed so continually and had a mortgage already on all her property. Messer Artese told her a great deal about the Tyrolean court. He had little good to say of the Margrave and the Maultasch. Certainly Ludwig was always in financial straits, for his wars had swallowed up mighty sums. But he borrowed from his Bavarian and Swabian lords, and anxiously avoided the help of the good, willing Messer Artese ; yes, he even redeemed at a sacrifice the mortgages which the Italian still held. The violent manner, too, in which the Margrave's viceroy, Konrad of Teck, was accustomed to bring in money and property—these confiscations and executions—went sorely against the grain of the quiet and polite Florentine. One should acquire money, certainly ; money, so long as it wasn't stolen, came from God. The tardy debtor should be shown no consideration, overdue mortgages should be called in ; certainly. But all with decency, politely, in good form. Dungeons, cutting heads off—pah, that was not done ; it was unseemly.

But Messer Artese was bitterest of all over the preference shown to the Jew Mendel Hirsch. What ? Before him, the quiet, modest, cultured Italian gentleman and good Christian, they put that stinking, gurgling, strutting, impudent, importunate Jew, that filthy devil's spawn ? Was it not enough that this people cursed by God, this people who had tortured and crucified our beloved Lord and Saviour, defiled the German and Italian towns ? Had the unholy Maultasch to throw them the land in the mountains as well, so that they might creep in like worms, devour everything, and no more be got rid of ? There they sat now, the loathsome vermin, cropping up everywhere, pressing their money on everybody unasked, and had the audacity, the wretched, pestilential rabble, to ask for a lower rate of interest than he, the highly-respected and honoured Florentine burgess, liked by all the princes and lords ! His face, usually so gentle, polite, and controlled, was distorted into a grimace of boundless rage.

Agnes listened to him quietly. She listened to it all, inscribed

it on her memory, stored it safely away, and was extraordinarily amiable ■ Messer Artese. He closed up, excused himself many times, and glided again into obscurity.

### III

It was a hard and stony course Margarete had to follow. Continuous war ; with the Luxemburger, the bishops, the Lombard cities, the refractory barons. Time and again the structures she built up so painfully were torn down, destroyed. In addition to that earthquakes, floods, fires, pestilence, the plague of locusts ; the finances badly crippled by the steady military expenditure. It was not easy to make the land flourish under these drawbacks. But her full womanhood, breathing and giving confidence, streamed into the land, supported it, gave it ever new growth and sap. She made allowances, released from their taxes cities which had suffered from war or fire, forced the stubborn barons in spite of their grumbling to pay at least a part of their tribute. All this happened as if by a natural law, without outcry or violence.

When she had difficult financial questions to solve, she sent for advice to the Jew, Mendel Hirsch. He appeared forthwith in his brown coat, fat, fidgety, and officious, heard Margarete out, wagged his head, smiled, said it was quite simple, and spluttered in many roundabout words an unforeseen solution. The little overdriven man, hounded over the earth, was very grateful to the Duchess for the goodwill which had given him a fairly secure resting-place and a roof over his head. He loved her, he felt with her, he exerted all his ingenuity for her.

For it was hard to keep one's head above water in the chaos of Tyrolean administration. True, they had bridled the headstrong feudal lords and ejected the calamitous Messer Artese. But the Margrave thought nothing of borrowing the great sums he needed from his Swabian and Bavarian lords. In return they were scrupulous in their demand for pledges and securities, and kept on snatching more for themselves, so that in the end nothing was gained. On the contrary ; it had been at least natives who bled the country formerly, but now foreigners, Bavarians and Swabians, batted on it. They sat in all the important positions ; the avaricious and violent Konrad of Teck had laid hold of monstrous possessions for himself, Hadmar of Duerrenberg had

seized the salt revenues of Hall, certain Munich gentlemen, Jakob Freiman, Grimoald Drexler and other citizens, the mines in the district of Landeck. Moreover, the most important duties and taxes were farmed out to Bavarians, Swabians, Austrians. On this point the Margrave would not listen to a word of advice. He trusted his Bavarians and Swabians ; they exploited his trust to the full. Nevertheless, Mendel Hirsch, who, protected by Margarete, kept prudently in the background, managed to insinuate into the agreements with these gentlemen clauses which saved the prince from being completely at the mercy of their caprices.

#### IV

In Ala, while two noblemen, Azzo and Marcabrun of Lizzana, were negotiating with a canon from Trent, in the middle of a sentence Baron Azzo, the elder of the brothers, reeled ; his face became yellowish, then black and blue ; he collapsed. In the soft parts under the armpits and under the thighs there were black, suppurating boils, as big as an egg. He rattled in the throat, did not return to consciousness, and died in a few hours. The gentleman from Trent rode back horrified to his city as fast as his horse could carry him. So the plague had arrived. Now it had broken into the land in the mountains. It had been no fable that four or five had already succumbed to it in Verona. And so now the Black Death was in the mountains. And now God help us all !

The pestilence had come from the East. It raged first of all along the coast, then passed into the hinterland. It killed in a few days, often in hours. In Naples, in Montpellier, two-thirds of the population died. In Marseilles the Bishop died, the entire Chapter, and all the monks and minorites. Large districts were without inhabitants. Great three-deckers tacked about the sea with all their cargo, and nobody at the helm, the whole crew having perished. The plague raged terribly at Avignon. The cardinals succumbed, the matter oozing from their boils defiled their magnificent vestments. The Pope closed himself into his innermost chamber, let nobody in, and kept a great fire going the whole day in which he burned aromatic herbs and frankincense to purify the air. In Prague, in the treasure vaults of his castle, Karl, the German King, crouched among his heaps of gold, curios and relics, fasting and praying.

Like a fury the pestilence burst into the valleys of Tyrol. Of the inhabitants of Wipptal only a third were left, of the populous monastery of Marienberg only Wyso, the Abbot, Rudolf, a priest, a lay brother, and Brother Goswin, the chronicler. There were valleys in which but one in six survived the plague. Because one's breath and sweat, clothes and eating utensils carried the sickness everyone fled from his fellows, hostile and suspicious. Friend fled from friend, bride from bridegroom, children from their parents. People expired without the sacrament ; in the towns many houses stood empty with all their furniture, and nobody would trust himself within them. Masses were not read, processes were not decided. The doctors suggested many reasons, but in the end could find no better one than that it was God's will. They could do nothing. Mad with fear men mortified themselves, scourged themselves ; women bound themselves into sisterhoods. Processions of flagellants, fanatics, prophets. Others drank themselves dead drunk, and practised every kind of gluttony and debauchery. The bleeding, emaciated, flagellant brethren encountered gay and drunken processions holding carnival.

Of Margarete's three children, Meinhard, the son, remained alive ; the two girls died. They lay hideously bloated with enormous black ulcers. Margarete thought : " Now they are as ugly as I."

She had no time to brood long over this. She worked, and went about, fearless, clear, and calm. In the monstrous confusion only a few of her commands were obeyed and that badly ; all the same, she kept her land more firmly in control and order than in the universal dissolution other rulers had been able. When the pestilence exhausted itself, she tightened the reins at once, and accommodated the complete administration of the country to the new and more elastic circumstances created by the depopulation. She took precautions, too, against the dissipation of the countless vacated properties, and used the opportunity to bring many lands and properties into her hands cheaply, but not dishonestly.

Messer Artese was very busy ; it was a good time for him. All over the world houses and estates, rights and privileges, had fallen to heirs who did not know what to do with them. He acquired and accumulated. But in Tyrol he encountered resistance.

Restrictions that hemmed him in, rights of pre-emptor by the court and by the authorities, obstinate clauses. In Taufers Castle, before Agnes, he let himself go, broke out, and raged. That Jew, the sly Mendel Hirsch, was to blame for it all ! He obstructed him, the good Christian financier, in his business. He had contrived all these impudent, diabolically sly clauses and difficulties just to trip him up.

Agnes let the Florentine rave till he was tired, listened quietly, and gazed at him steadily with her deep blue eyes. Then in a calm, exasperating voice she began to relate things. She had been on the Rhine. There in countless towns they had seized the Jews and burned them. For the Jews had created the pestilence, they had thrown poison into the wells. She knew it for a fact. In Zofingen they had found poison. In Basle she had been present herself when they had driven the Jews into an island in the Rhine, into a wooden house, and burned them. They had shrieked horribly, and the stench had remained for a long time in the air. They had done rightly. The cursed Jews were really guilty of the pestilence. Lame Albert of Austria, it was true, the Bishop of Mainz and the Maultasch protected their Jews. Agnes added slowly and calmly, her eyes steadily on the Florentine : " No doubt they have their own good reasons."

Messer Artese listened but did not reply. Returned to his native Florence without having finished his business.

Soon from Italy the rumour came creeping through the valleys of Tyrol, slimily, making headway until it became a firmer and firmer certainty : the Jews had made the pestilence. The pestilence would not cease so long as they let the Jews stay in the country. Suspicion came to a head. Persecution, violence.

Meanwhile, the Jews went about their business. They had much business, great business, they were very important. Little Mendel Hirsch ran about fidgeting and sputtering ; his countless children ran, olive-eyed and important ; even the aged mumbling grandmother revived, and enquired anxiously : " How does business go ? " It was going excellently, thanks be to God. The pestilence was slackening of itself. There was much to do, to sell, to buy, to negotiate, contracts to be made. In a few weeks now they would be able with God's will to hold their first great market in Bozen after the pestilence. Her Grace the Duchess—God shield her !—needed Mendel at every turn.

Meanwhile the menace drew near, dangerous, snarling, senseless, and ever blacker. The Jews recognised it. It had been like this twelve years ago at the great massacre prompted by the Armleder brothers. It came this time from the south-west. In vain the Pope, the wise, kindly, worldly Clement, set his face against it, and sent out his papal bulls, pointing to the fact that the Jews had been struck down by the plague like the others ; why then should they help it on ? It was not the poisoned wells, it was their ready cash and the written claims on their creditors that caused their undoing. The Jews were robbed and murdered in Burgundy, on the Rhine, in Holland, in Lombardy, in Poland. In twelve, in twenty, in a hundred, in two hundred communities. The Tyrolean Jews waited, fasted and prayed. There was no need to give huge presents to the authorities here. That the Duchess would protect them to the utmost of her power was certain. Also that the Margrave was their well-wisher, like his father, the Emperor, the encourager of trade and the townsmen, who had always held his shield over them. But it had become evident that against a maddened populace who scented blood and money neither Emperor, nor Pope, nor prison was of use. One could only wait, pray, and go about one's business.

And then suddenly, on one and the same day, it broke out in Riva, Rovereto, Trent, and Bozen. At Riva the Jews were drowned in the lake ; at Rovereto, amid great hubbub and rejoicing, they were made to leap to their death from a precipice ; at Trent they were burned. In Bozen people paid more attention to pillage, and the killing was badly organised. They went about it unmethodically, and thus the mumbling grandmother, a daughter-in-law, and one of the small children remained alive.

The Margrave had not been able to protect his Jews in Munich : in Hall and Innsbruck he interposed energetically between them and the violent mob. He was for justice and commonsense. If he could not help the dead any more, at least he could chase the pack of pursuers off their booty. The murderers had little joy of their deed. Bavarian and Swabian lords in place of the dead now exacted their dues on behalf of the Margrave, and far more harshly than the Jews could have done. At last King Karl, too, got his finger in the pie. He demanded his share in the property left by the murdered people, from Ludwig, as well as from all the

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MENDEL HIRSCH

municipalities in which Jews had died. Sharp haggling began over this.

As soon as she heard of the atrocities, Margarete hastened to Bozen, horrified and downcast. She arrived ■ night. Saw by flickering torchlight the house brutally torn down, the cherished little rooms, once crammed full of the most varied belongings, now empty, plundered, defiled. She saw the corpses of the sons, daughters, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law ; of the swarm of quick, almond-eyed children ; the first horribly mangled and mutilated, the others without any obvious wounds. They lay there very still, who had been so brisk and agile, and very still too lay Mendel Hirsch. He had on a prayer mantle, and phylacteries on his arm and forehead ; no wound could be seen ; in the torchlight it looked as if he were smiling, obsequious, important, officious, mild, and shrewd. Margarete almost believed that in a moment he must shake his head, and gurgle, that it was not so bad after all, it was quite simple ; the people were not really wicked, they were only exasperated, and a little slow and dull in the understanding ; what they needed was merely good guidance. But he said nothing ; he neither fidgeted nor gurgled ; he lay quite still. He had meant well, by himself chiefly of course, but also by her and the country, and he had been wise and very capable, and had brought great profit to the land, and ■ her beloved towns. Now they had slaughtered him, stupidly, senselessly, bestially. Why, why had they done it ? She turned to one of the bystanders with the stern, imperious question. " Well, he made the pestilence ! " said he, bashful, stupid, and a little defiant.

In a corner the surviving small child wailed softly ; the mother, strangely arrayed in all her finery, tried to sing it to sleep in a broken, discordant voice ; the grandmother mumbled. Margarete went nearer, and raised her hand to stroke the child. She felt weary and wretched. She saw her hand in the torchlight ; it was large and shapeless, the skin was dull and yellowish ; she had forgotten to paint it.

## JERUSALEM DELIVERED

By ARNOLD ZWEIG

*Translated by* JOSEPH LEFTWICH

Arnold Zweig, born in 1887 at Glogau. Resident in Berlin. His first book, "The Klopfer Family," had a Jewish theme, and Jewish subjects have continued to hold his interest. His play dramatising the Tisza Eszlar ritual murder affair, written in 1915, and recast in 1920, was produced at the Deutsche Theatre in Berlin and awarded the Kleist Prize. "The Return of the Apostate" describes the fate of a baptised Jew who had risen to be a Bishop. His "Case of Sergeant Griecha" has been acclaimed as the most important book written round the Great War. "Jerusalem Delivered," selected by Arnold Zweig for this volume, was written in 1910.

EVENING fell on the besieged city that rang with the noise of destruction. All the streets leading to the temple were full of the sound of people ; at times they were jammed against the houses by the herds of sacrificial beasts, bullocks and sheep, that were being driven in a cloud of red dust into the sanctuary for the next morning, when there would be a tenfold intercessionary offering burnt as a sacrifice to God.

Women, wailing and shrieking, threw their naked arms round the necks of their husbands, for these had to go forth armed to guard all the gates and the outer walls : they would guard them but feebly, irresolutely, without faith. Outside the King's palace the populace swirled. Many were clamouring that the King should open his treasure-house to the enemy and save them all, though they knew that the treasure vaults were empty ; others surged about a heap of stones, of which there were many left over from the recent building, from which a grey-haired old man harangued them, yelling above all these heads that Hezekiah must sacrifice his first-born on the altar to Jehovah as a burnt-offering, since he had provoked God by his alliance with Egypt, and had roused the fury of the Great King. The crowd listened, irresolute and silent, but a pupil of the Prophets cursed the blasphemer, and foaming at the mouth, demanded that he should

be stoned. A wave of indignation caught up the incited people. Their fear was turned to frenzy ; all arms reached out for stones, and the old man was dragged down, crushed and buried beneath the stones. In the palace all was silent. The King was not in the palace.

Bending forward, leaning on the white staff of sovereignty, he stood on the outer wall and gazed, troubled and malignant, down to the field that stretched about the aqueduct on the upper stream outside the city. Those who were well disposed to him said that Hezekiah had the head of his ancestor, David, bronzed and regal. But his cheeks hung flabby, and, though under forty, his eyes were dulled. It was the fourteenth year of his reign. Now, at the setting of the sun, the distant countryside gleamed with the ruddy glow of countless helmets, swords and spear-heads, lifted up to the reddened sky, and seething with the coming and going of men, horses, camels, and mules that Sennacherib, King of Assyria, had sent here to seize Jerusalem. And because he himself invested the city of Lachish, there commanded here in his stead Rabshakah, his Chief Cup-Bearer, his Lord High Steward and the Lord High Chamberlain of the Realm. Behind Hezekiah waited five warriors of his Philistine bodyguard, with spiked helmets, shields and long lances, for him to descend ; but he did not stir. Only his fingers disarranged the ordered locks of his black beard.

At last three men mounted the wall panting, and the King turned to them. He had sent Eliakim and Sebna, his Steward and his Scribe, with the most venerable of the priests, clad in sackcloth, to Isaiah the Prophet, the son of Amoz, that he should counsel him and pray to Jehovah. For Rabshakah had deliberately blasphemed the God of Judah. Before all the multitude of the people who had crouched on the walls, dumb and outraged, he had cried aloud in the Jewish tongue so that all should understand : Where is there a God among all the gods of the earth that has delivered his land out of my hand, that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand !

The Scribe and the Steward bowed before the King. He spoke to them hastily, in a dull voice. And they rose up and reported that the man of God, after he had heard their mission, had shut himself up to pray. Then he had emerged after a long time, and his face was sanctified. All said that he had spoken

with God. And he told them that the Lord, for His Great Name's Sake, would save the city, if they would first cleanse themselves of the unatoned abominations that still cried aloud within their walls. They should bring out Simeon, the Levite, from the cisterns beneath the palace of the King, and undo his shackles. Then they should bind a sharp, sacrificial knife to his right hand, and an hour before midnight lower him from the wall to creep to the tents of the enemy. There he should cry out seven times as loudly as he could : " Jehovah, the God of Judah, is invisible, holy, omnipresent and omnipotent ! " And then thrust the knife into his heart—for his crime against the Lord is such that by his own death he must restore the power of the Lord. Hence all else.

The King commanded that the Levite should be brought instantly, but Eliakim had already liberated him. He mounted the stairs laboriously, with his mutilated stumps, and stood in chains before the King. His legs were black to the knees with the slime of the cistern. He eagerly inhaled the night air, his eyes burned in an emaciated bearded face, and his chains clanked at every movement. On his arms and cheeks he bore the marks of rat-bites, and the thumbs of both hands and feet had been hacked off, so that the blemish cast him out of the priesthood, and the wounds were scaled up with pitch. He was still young. He had taken a silver basin and a silver ewer from the treasures of the Sanctuary for a woman, and he must die. The populace had clamoured that he should be stoned, but the Council of the Elders of the Priests had preferred not to have a scandal in this time of stress and had kept him in the cistern for seventeen days.

The King shuddered at the grisly sight and then stepped back, for he stunk like a charnel-house. He asked him whether he would bear witness for the Lord, and the sinner beat his breast, and cried hoarsely amid the noise of the chains that it would be an act of clemency. He had repented. The King commanded that he should be washed, and given wine, bread and oil. Then they all descended, just as the last glow vanished from the edge of the sky.

The Assyrians had not yet dug any trenches, nor erected walls about their encampment ; the bright and patched tents of their right wing extended within two bow-shots of the city walls. In the apertures of these canvas houses and in the rudely-laid-out

streets between them the mercenaries ran about naked, preparing for the night, grinding corn between stones and fetching water in big earthenware pots hanging down from a yoke on either side of their shoulders, making them look like the scales of a balance. They were the rearguard and had only that day reached the camp, young warriors who were in this country for the first time. Only a few of their captains had already served under the previous Great Kings, and taken and burnt Samaria three years ago. These big-limbed men frightened the natives when they threw off their armour and everything, because of their startlingly white skins, their hair yellow as maize, and their round eyes, blue as sea-pebbles. They fought on foot, in serried ranks, Doric Hoplites from the coastal towns and the Ægian Isles, some of them born even in Sparta, of which they were very proud. They looked across the city, eager to vanquish it, for it must be full of spoil and women. For it was common talk in the army that Hezekiah had recently, to gain favour with the Great King, sent him three hundred kikkar of silver and thirty kikkar of gold. And they lusted for women, for Rabshakah had forbidden them to bring any away with them when they came from Lachish, in order to goad their lust to storm the city. When several nevertheless followed, he ordered the Persian sharpshooters to shoot them down with their arrows.

The army extended before Jerusalem in a sickle-shaped arc. Next to the white tents of the Dorians were the black tents of the Amalekites, tried warriors, riding on camels, without helmets or armour, and hurling from afar javelins poisoned with cadaver. Beside these rose blue-painted leathern huts for the Assyrian nobles, who fought in full armour from scythe-wheeled chariots, and camped as a bodyguard for the commanders of the army, Rabshakah and his two companions.

On the left wing neighed and whinnied the horses of the Persians. The Persians slept without tents, on the ground, and fought mounted with bow and arrow, wearing round casques and armour made of double folds of linen stuffed with sheep's wool in between. The extreme left wing was formed by the Syrians, infantry armed with spears and daggers. They sharpened their scimitars from the inside, and protected themselves with spiked helmets, leathern armour studded with copper and great reed shields, on which they stretched antelope skin. They were the

first to arrive outside the capital, and had placed their guards in trenches that they had dug with their swords.

But the Greeks, exhausted and sleepy, had not had time for that. So it was arranged that their sentinels should keep watch in full equipment, cuirass, greaves, shield, and be relieved every three hours, though no attack was anticipated. The officers of the guard stood outside their tents, clad only in chitons, listening to two Amalekite officers tediously describing the buildings of the city. An interpreter translated the uncouth desert speech word by word into the Doric sound—as if they were grubs changing into winged butterflies.

They had made friends with the taciturn camel-riders on the long journey down, and their eyes turned wonderingly in the direction indicated by the outstretched brown arms, on the wrists of which there were daggers hanging down suspended from short chains. They saw the gleaming house of the kings, that the warrior David had built long ago, and his son Solomon, the mage, had extended and inlaid with gold in a single night, with the aid of the serpent-headed, winged Seraphim. And on the Temple Mount rose the House of Jehovah, Who was the God of His land, and dwelt therein invisible, almighty, in chambers all wrought of gold.

The Hoplites longed to loot it. Yet they laughed, scoffing at the God who did not dare to appear to anyone. For each of them knew what his gods looked like, old or youthful, strong, bearded, men, or women with lovely breasts.

But the House of Jehovah still glowed red on its height, though the sun had long since vanished. Then suddenly they pointed out to each other a giant cloud in the east, that stretched rose-coloured, four long figures and one short, extended from a point in the sky over half the vault of heaven, reminding them of a bloody, clutching hand, and each of them sensed in the other silent bewilderment behind frightened lids.

The air was stifling. The night brought no cool. And though the cloud spread over the sky, the Amalekites said it would not rain. They sat with the Greeks for some time after sundown to shorten the hours of the night-watch. They were clad entirely in white linen, brown-skinned and black-bearded, their fingernails dyed yellowish-red with henna, and their chests hung with bone amulets, and drank wine out of leathern cups, while the

Greeks quaffed it, diluted with water, out of wooden bowls. They lay, nude and white-skinned on the ground, and groaned at the heat. Beside Protocles, a young Greek of the Isles, lay Agasilaos, a scarred centurion. He loved the stripling. The Amalekites knew that, and shuddered secretly at the abomination. The wineskin was emptied, and finally they all listened in silence ■ the Syrian interpreter who spoke of Jehovah. The God no longer appeared contemptible to the Greeks. They thought they sensed in the increasingly oppressive atmosphere something of His power, and to their facile and profoundly stirred imaginations His invisibility appeared gradually more terrifying, and His omnipresent rule over His people and land pressed fearfully on their souls. An hour before midnight Agasilaos took up his helmet, cuirass and sword and went to inspect the watch. At the entrance, tied to a tent-pole, knelt the sleeping camel of the Amalekites, on which, both riding the one beast, they had come hard upon the Greek encampment. The army lay sunk at last in heavy slumber. The city, too, was silent, and only the oil-fed lamp above the drinkers threw a little light into the blackness of the new-moon night.

Suddenly the carousers heard an awful cry somewhere near in the darkness. They sprang rapidly to their feet, and listened, sobered. It was instantly heard again, more fervent, closer. The Amalekites grasped at their amulets, and the interpreter translated tremblingly to the Greeks—"Jehovah, the God of Judah, is invisible, holy, omnipresent and omnipotent!" It came immediately, a third time, full of desperate triumph, and without a sound the tent collapsed. The roar penetrating the heavy dreams of the camel had raised the image of a lion. At the third cry he had jumped up, quivering, dragging the tent-pole with him.

Those buried beneath the heavy canvas thought the hand of God was closing about them, and cried out in fear. Several managed to release themselves. They rushed into the camp, shouting: "The God! The God!" and were at once cut down; for the distant cry of Simeon had awakened many of the sleepers, who, half intoxicated still with drowsiness, hurried out, naked, carrying their weapons, to repel the sally of the besieged. With angry cries and in utter darkness they thrust at each other. Agasilaos came running up at the head of all the guards, whom he

had found standing up asleep in full armour. They wanted to atone for their shame, and thrust at everything. Agasilaos himself, among the others he slew, drove his sword through the back of Protocles, just as he had struggled free from the tent, and ran off calling for Protocles.

At many points in the carnage that kept on extending, they realised by the cries of the combatants and the wounded, that Greek was striving with Greek. That added to the confusion and the frenzy. The foe seemed everywhere, and impalpable. They began to waver and fall back. The mass in the rear were driven into the tents of the Amalekites. These, who did not know the tongue of the Greeks, and understood nothing beyond the noise of battle, defended themselves according to their fashion. For the first two companies had both lost their centurions, who had fallen at the tent, so they fought without orders, and hurled their spears into the rearmost ranks of their assailants, or slew them in close combat, breast to breast, and plunging the daggers at their wrists into their backs, for they knew the enemy only when they felt his breath. Hoplitcs established contact in the dark by means of calls. They rallied and tried to prevent the internecine warfare. Obviously the barbarians of the desert were mutineers, confederates of the Hebrews. Efforts were made to light torches, but all fires had been trampled down, or smothered under the dead.

The Amalekites threw their spears, and slowly retreated. Most of them took cover behind their camels, and from there shot their quivers empty. Some mounted their beasts, but they instantly fell off dead. For as the phalanx of the Hoplitcs pressed on in front, in deadly advance, Rabshakah, convinced that a desperate sortie was being made, had ranged his bodyguard round him, and ordered the Persians to help the Amalekites. The Persian arrows sought their targets among the camel-riders. These turned, mad with rage and despair against the new foe. Their poisoned javelins soundlessly answered the twanging of the crossbows. While the Persians attacked on horseback, Rabshakah had all his scythe-wheeled chariots harnessed, and drove backwards to give them room. But his wooden torches were not enough, and the steel scythes at the hub of the wheels slashed the tendons of the Persian horses. The Amalekites had no lights at all, and since the Persians understood no language but their own, they could

not tell whether the battle-cries were Hebrew. They took those facing them as enemies, and those, though they now and again recognised the Persian casques, could not but defend themselves.

This battle, man against man, went on for three hours. The camp bubbled with the awful, shrieking, clashing, howling din in which all sounds merged—the ring of steel against steel, the dull thrust of weapons into flesh, the fierce panting and calling of the warriors, who in the intolerable darkness wanted at least to hear each other, and the shrill moaning of the wounded who were being trampled on. But all the terrors of ordinary battle were surpassed by the indistinctness of the enemy, and fear because of their impalpable closeness. Horror and uncertainty paralysed their arms and stung them, too, to raging hate. There were men who suddenly laughed shrilly and danced, others fell as soon as a cold steel point touched their naked bellies. Many lunged about them blindly and from time to time heaved out cries till they tired and were instantly struck down. But they all felt the fear of death invade their chilled hearts, long before the unseen weapon of the invisible foe struck them—were they fighting against phantoms, armies of angels, or angry gods? And in vain their frightened eyes, growing gradually accustomed to the dark, sought among the countless arms and heads, moving darker in the dark air, for palpable hosts of foes. Commands in all the languages of the camp were shouted and obeyed, and fed the slaughter. It was completed by the Syrians, who suddenly appeared in closed ranks and fell on the Greeks from behind. For Rabshakah believed the right wing was attacked and retreating, so he finally had the Syrian infantry advance from the left in a semi-circle, to force the attackers away from the wall and crush them from the rear, which they did at the quick march. For a short time the Greeks defended themselves on both sides, and then they broke and ran. Like the bursting of a dam the entire army was driven by the Syrians into the interior. For the camels and horses broke loose as soon as they found room, and dragged the bodyguard with them. The Syrians pushed after them in closed ranks. When dawn came, they recognised the wreckage of the scythed-chariots, found that their commander was missing, having probably pursued the rout, and they hastily prepared to catch up with him again.

When the sun rose the field glistened red with blood and was

everywhere heaped with corpses. The Jews had heard a wild uproar outside the city, and had fearfully awaited the morrow. It showed them the camp laid waste and the enemy destroyed. There was an outburst of jubilation. The men hurried out of the city, to drive off for a few hours the jackals, that red to the ears, had dug their pointed snouts into the entrails of the dead, to kill the hopelessly wounded, and to collect arms against the next onslaught of the Great King. They brought all gold ■ the Temple, for Jehovah's angel alone had smitten the Assyrians, without the hand of man. When he heard the news, the king broke into a loud exultation, shook with incessant laughter, and clapped his hands.

But Isaiah, when he heard of the horror, went stone white, sank slowly to his knees, trembling, and wept, his arms on the stone floor of his house, and on them his forehead, close to the ground. Among the booty, an immense haul, shimmering gold, jewels, and weapons of all kinds, they were stunned to find a sacrificial knife of the Temple, and none knew how it had come to be among the heathen swords ; and those who suspected were silent, for many corpses were trampled into formless clods. Only when Sebna, the Royal Scribe, and three venerable priests solemnly brought it to the Prophet, that he should look on it, he held the blood-black instrument on his two open hands, like a babe, gazed ■ it with a slow, blissful smile and pressed it reverently to his forehead. Then he unbound the white band from the head of the nearest priest, wrapped the knife in it, and rose up to lay this witness before the Lord, beside the precious votive offerings in the undefiled, enthroned Temple.

## THE OLD HOUSE

By VICKI BAUM

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ALONGSIDE the river, where the ghetto used to be, there are now new houses, real parvenus, shot up in a few years, with extensive, tasteless, newly-painted façades, looking down soberly and altogether pleased with themselves at the world and the cluster of old ghetto-houses, as parvenus do. But when you come across the bridge from the elegant city on the other side of the river, you perceive that there are different people living in these houses, and that these people lead a different kind of life, and that the sluggish, drab-coloured river is the frontier to a world of its own.

The air is always heavy with the smell of onions and fat; the shops are dirty, and the sign-boards bear remarkable, glorious, colourful names that do not seem at all comic to their owners, but rather beautiful, noble and expressive. For Mr. Isaac Golddust, who sells kosher geese, Mr. Leb Butterfly, who buys and sells cast-off clothing—even the hunchback, Jacob Fairyblossom, who peddles shoe-laces and lead pencils all day long in the town over there, and is treated worse than a dog—they are all at home here, this ■ their territory, in spite of all the new structures! And they stand about in the dingy, gloomy streets, with a look of dignity in their pinched, dejected faces, greeting with scrupulous politeness the greasy, sallow Jewesses who lean across the shop-doors, swapping poor goods and dull philosophy.

Day after day they sell every conceivable and inconceivable kind of thing. On Friday they bathe according to the prescribed ritual in the mikveh, and on Saturday they stand with greasy, shiny hair and coats in the cramped, dark synagogue, and chant mechanically the ancient prayers that are saturated with despair

and hysterical fanaticism. And all these Jews are a little bowed, they laugh rarely and dispute often and excitably. But they pat smilingly and affectionately the tousled heads of the precocious children with dark, knowing eyes that are playing in the streets.

In between two tall new structures stands a little old house. At a distance it looks as if it had crawled in here to hide its shame, and was now cowering in embarrassment against the big, bare chimney. But when you come closer you see that it has a little windward balcony stuck on in the middle like a little sharp nose, and that there ■ on the roof a very tall, remarkably narrow chimney-shaft, puffing out lusty, round balls of smoke into the blue air.

A sign-board over the house-door proclaims proudly and invitingly : " White Wolf River Baths."

But at close quarters, the little house looks quite impudent and happy. And one realises at the same time why from a distance it appears to be huddled up : in order to get to the front door you have to go down fourteen steps—old, exceedingly, worn steps, in whose crevices little pools collect where rakish, loud-voiced sparrows bathe. Down here, nearly a storey below street level, there has even been room enough for a little green tea-garden at the side of the door. Through a dark entrance and a gay-coloured glass door, you come into a dimly-lighted yard full of unexpected and astonishing corners and angles. Out of the drain-pipe rises a whitish-greenish vapour and a pungent smell of onions and slops. Broken barrows, cats, a woman caretaker, a couple of pedlars, women, and all sorts of rubbish stand about in the yard on top of each other. In front of a little hut, with the inscription " Pay here " on it, stands a woman, swearing that she hasn't a kreutzer on her, till the old cashier inside angrily bangs down the window. Then the woman, sighing and sobbing, brings out a couple of kreutzer from her sleeves, her apron, her petticoat. The old woman in the hut opens the window again, takes the money, and hands out a ticket, and the woman trudges through a little dark door. The old woman comes out of her hut, sits down on the green-painted bench at its side, and starts knitting.

. . . . .

For the last thirty years old Mrs. Blum has spent the whole of her life in this little house, in this strange, low-lying courtyard,

full of corners and cut off from the world—between the hut with the inscription "Pay here" on it, and the green-painted bench.

When the Blum family, utterly impoverished by a disastrous fire, had come into the town from an insignificant provincial Jewish hole, the oldest son, who had been there for a long time previously, had by dint of much begging and pleading, by protection and swindling contrived to have his mother appointed keeper of the mikveh, the ritual bath.

A couple of gloomy little cabins fitted with baths, two pitch-black rooms with stone walls and filled with warmed-up river water—the so-called cisterns—that was the "White Wolf River Baths." The work was done by Jenny, the bath-attendant, who also had to recite the prescribed prayer for everyone who immersed and Karl, who, in a coal-black engine-room, heated up the water. In addition, there had been a tabby cat, which had died, however, after a few years, and was merely incidental. Otherwise, everything was still as it was when Mrs. Blum took it over at the age of forty.

She had not made any further acquaintance with the city. She did not know that this corner of it was something exceptional, that the people who came here were cut off from the life and from the entire world on the other side of the river; to her it was all so natural. In this dirty yard, full of corners, her children had played, grown up, married one after the other, and had left the old house. Then, when things went badly with her eldest daughter, Rose, withered, small and vivacious, who had gone through life like a parody on her name, she had moved back with her husband and child into the little house—now there was a grandchild playing in the yard.

The old pedlars who used to say "Your son? Bless his heart! Lovely child!" now said: "Your grandchild? Bless his heart! Clever child!"

And the old woman looked displeased at this praise, for she knew that Mr. Golddust would immediately after swear "God punish me ■ I've got more than nine kreutzer on me." The price of a bath was fifteen kreutzer. And though the pedlars had played this game for thirty years without any success, they still hoped every Friday that they might perhaps get a kreutzer or two knocked off.

If one of the old gentlemen carried things too far, and did not want to pay up, Karl was called out of the coal-black engine-room. He was old and his lungs were diseased, he was deaf and a sot, but the regular customers of the "river baths" still fled at the sight of him as they did thirty years ago. The glass door rattled, the caretaker scolded, the old Jews jabbered, and every corner of the place was full of shrill noise, that swelled and subsided and faded away in a final glassy rattle of the gay door.

After such an outburst, the silence in the yard was always doubly profound and heavy. Little Leo—"Bless his heart—a clever child!"—clambered up again on one of the old barrows, in the extreme and smallest corner of the yard, and fell to dreaming: The barrow was a ship travelling over distant foreign seas, through fierce storms and adventures and past fairy-like, beautiful luxuriant islands. He climbed the sheer walls of castles owned by robber knights—a broken bed belonging to the caretaker—he rode through grey deserts and saw distant, green, unattainable oases; for the wall of the next door yard separated him from the walnut tree whose fresh, light leaves shone in the gloom of the yard like a veritable oasis. Often the chilly voice of the grandmother pulled the little one out of his dreams:

"Leo, call for the food-basket."

Then he summoned up all his strength, and pulled the bent, rusted bell-pull that connected with the flat of the first floor, and stood waiting tensely for the strangely-bellied and twisted basket that came swinging down on a blue cord, piled full with bread and fruit. He emptied the basket, and was again deep in his dreams—a princess had sent him, languishing in the deepest dungeon of the castle, the most enchanting food. That was why he was collecting priceless treasures for her here below—bits of glass, nails, coloured threads; he had even found a little oyster shell once, into whose insignificant round an evil wizard had conjured the roarings of the distant sea.

But his grandmother said testily: "He keeps all sorts of rubbish in his pockets. If you shake the boy he'll rattle like my old coffee-mill."

But she shook him rarely, and let him go his dream-ways without knowing them. She sat, knitting, and gazed with a dull look in her cold, grey eyes, straight in front of her.

When the caretaker or one of the ladies—for ladies, too,

frequented the mikveh, wives of Rabbis or very orthodox wealthy Jewesses—sat down beside old Mrs. Blum, she would sigh, pull a dissatisfied face, and relate in answer to urgent and anxious enquiries for the thousandth time all about her "aches." These "aches" which were, according to her mood, in her chest, arm, back or somewhere else, and could not be cured nor even located by any doctor, had for years been her sole joy and pride. In her opinion her "cramps" made her something superior to the other women who lived in the house; almost as distinguished as the ladies who came sometimes to the baths. By means of these aches she tyrannised her children as she had once in the same way tyrannised her husband. She had entrenched herself so thoroughly into the advantageous part of the everlastingly sick woman that she sometimes actually felt the aches and cramps, and she was rarely so annoyed as when the old doctor had once patted her amiably on the back and said:

"You're a strong, healthy woman, you are. At seventy! You're good for another thirty years! At least!"

That was disagreeable. For though old Mrs. Blum clung to life tenaciously, it was very agreeable and noble, however, to be able to talk to people about her approaching death.

Each year, at Passover and again in the autumn, on the Day of Atonement, she always wept—big, assuaging, deeply-felt tears, because she was sure it was the last festival she would live to see. And her four children stood round her helplessly, trying to find some way of consoling her; but they could think of nothing to deprive the old lady of the joy of these festive sufferings.

Each time she got an "attack" at night, she groaned and moaned, and had the children called to her bed—where she lay with her old hands convulsed under the bedclothes—and said good-bye to them in a voice trembling with fear. Her head fell back, her breath became fainter. Half an hour later she was sleeping soundly. But for a week after she had the pleasure of telling her customers how closely death had passed her.

"Well—God gives life, God gives dying. We are old people, Mrs. Blum," said Mr. Golddust, "we are subject to the one as to the other. Good night and good Sabbath."

For it was Friday night. From the little synagogue on the second floor came nasally chanting the voice of the Cantor, descended in intervals, ancient and strange, down into the yard with

its numerous corners, and rose up again to fall flat in the bright yellow nut-tree over there.

Old Mrs. Blum packed away the day's takings in the old green box, and went slowly up the stairs to her rooms.

"The pain is something awful to-day," she said, stopping at the caretaker's door for a minute. "It can't last much longer now."

In the little flat there lived with the old woman, her daughter Rose, withered, vivacious, petite, her husband, a ragged, emaciated consumptive agent, little Leo, and the "young gentleman"—the name by which the youngest, unmarried son was known for many years past. He was forty now, and had managed by means of several fraudulent bankruptcies to amass a little fortune, which enabled him to live like a dandy and a man-about-town, the pride and representative, and at the same time the milch-cow of the family.

If the grass-green gay carpets with the scornfully laughing red lions on them in the bath-cabins got torn, if anything went wrong with one of the baths or with the narrow exhaust-pipe that connected with the engine, if the coal bill was sent in, to the astonishment of the entire family, if the emaciated agent got into debt, it was always the "young gentleman" who put things right with easy assurance. In return for that and a comparatively high rental he occupied a tiny, windowless closet, that had to filch its poor little meed of light from the bright living-room through a glass door. The young gentleman got his meals, and was scolded when he came late for them, which happened on the whole seldom. He, too, scolded in a quiet, kindly voice when his shoes were not polished—which happened, on the whole, often—and for the rest, he went his own ways, in which connection it must, alas, be remarked that these ways were not always the most virtuous or the cleanest, that he always went these ways at night, and that it was to them that he owed his reputation as a man about town.

When he had finished his meal, he stood up with an absent, important air, mumbled something that sounded like "more work to do," patted the old woman's wig, said cheerfully and yet deferentially: "My respects, Madame Blum," and went out, whistling. He came back after midnight, and brought the alien

smell of cheap, gay night-haunts into his tiny closet. He was a little annoyed at the creaking of his bed, listened for a few minutes to the sound of the old lady's regular breathing that came in through the open door of the adjoining room, and fell asleep.

The old woman had heard the young gentleman come in. She was awakened an hour previously by an uncomfortable stabbing pain in the eyes, that she was now tensely observing, with increasing interest. She sighed softly, as the pain became more acute, as if a hard and hardening needle were pushed across the eyes. "Due to sneezing," she finally reflected, and then turned over softly on the other side.

The bright curtains of the windows did not cut into the dark chamber so sharply as in the other sleepless nights, and the darkness was not so dense as otherwise. Strange grey mists arose—the old woman watched them tensely—subsided, sank lower, lower, and dispersed, while above, on the ceiling, a new grey veil formed and grew in wavering lines. Meanwhile she again felt the sharp stabbing pain—no, it was not a stab—it was the tiny, light-green spot that glided there along the wall—now it scattered below in a lot of glittering rockets that hotly pierced and burned the old woman's eyes, while a bright green spot again glided down from the wall.

The clock struck four times, slowly, deeply, then twice, lightly, quickly. The old woman convulsively passed her feverish hand over her temple. The pain there had grown unbearable.

"Mother dear, what is the matter," asked her son, wakened by her groaning. "Aren't you feeling well?"

He lighted a candle, put on his slippers, got the bottle of cognac that he always kept in readiness for one of his mother's night attacks, and went softly up to her bed. The old woman shrieked when she saw the candle and, whimpering, put her hand over her eyes. From the next room came running in little scraggy Rose, disturbed and crying:

"Mother dear, have you got your cramps again? Give her some cognac!" she shouted at her brother. "Why don't you move!"

"No, it isn't cramps," groaned the old woman. "My eyes, and my head. My eyes—oh, my eyes." And she shrieked again as the young gentleman helplessly bent over her with the candle. She whimpered for a while, and then she started shrieking. "It's

tearing my head off. It's scorching—it's scorching! Call the doctor! I'm dying!—I'm dying!"

Her thin hands tremblingly clutched the bedcover, her eyes were shut—and she kept on shrieking, hoarse, shrill—incessant:

"The doctor—oh—the doctor—I'm dying——"

The young gentleman dressed hastily, with his hands trembling.

"I'm going for the doctor, mother dear—I'm going for him at once. Be calm now—please—be calm——"

She went on whimpering, tired out now: "The doctor—my head—I'm dying——"

"See you presently, Mrs. Blum," the young gentleman said in a desperate attempt at a pleasantry, and rushed out.

Rose knelt down beside the bed, and helplessly stroked her mother's groping, faded hands. From the next room came, punctuated by groans and coughing, the sleepy voice of her husband pacifying little Leo.

The groaning of the old woman did not cease. It grew in volume, and swelled into a formless, animal-like bellow. The old body shook with pain and effort, and her shrieks rang through the whole of the old house. The neighbours crawled frightened out of their beds and came in wearing the most amazing negligés, to inquire the cause of that anguished shrieking. There was an adventurous movement to and fro in that tiny room, people pushed and jostled, wrapped up in shawls, with frightened, distorted faces, shaken by the unusual occurrence, and the unaccustomed hour, loomed up like phantoms in the fitful light of the candle, and vanished again in the shadows on the wall. A welter of voices rose and fell, whispering, questioning, quietening; and above it all rose the piercing shrieks of the old woman.

The young gentleman pushed his way with the doctor through the crowded room. The crush cleared, the old woman quickly withdrew into the next room. Rose lighted the lamp, and its equalised light got rid of the terrifying corners and shadows. The young gentleman tried, though his voice was shaky, to do the honours to the doctor, with the sure elegance of the man about town. The old woman, however, was quiet now. When the light of the lamp had flared up she had buried her head in the bolster, and was only moaning softly to herself.

The doctor sat down by the bed with a benevolent gesture, put a few questions in a cheerful voice, drew his soft, dexterous hands

along the old head, let his pince-nez slide gaily off his nose, and became increasingly friendly and cheerful. Then he did something with an instrument to the old woman's eyes, and the pains abated, though that did not make her stop whimpering.

"Now, now, granny, calm yourself, and go to sleep," said the doctor. "It's nothing—a little catarrh of the eyes—not worth worrying about, a trifle."

The young gentleman and Rose gained the impression that catarrh of the eyes must be something very pleasant and desirable—the word sounded so delightful as the doctor said it. They were relieved and happy. Only catarrh of the eyes—nothing much, was it?

In the next room, the doctor said with a benevolent smile: "Your mother has cataract—must be operated—a small thing—will soon be over. A trifle—cataract."

One might think that cataract was nothing much—"now if it was glaucoma—but it's only cataract—"

The old woman was lying down quietly now—a black bandage over her eyes—at times she patted the black material tenderly, proudly; she felt that this was something more distinguished than just "aches."

"Good night, mother," said Rose, who seemed to have grown thinner with all the excitement. The young gentleman extinguished the lamp, and lighted the spluttering, little yellow night-light. Then he wrapped himself shivering in his overcoat, and sat down on his mother's bed. That was how it had always been, after every "attack" his mother had. Only the black bandage looked disquieting in the flickering light.

The young gentleman closed his eyes, and in front of him danced the gay forms of the harlots with whom he had been only a little while ago. And then the night-light spluttered, and the old woman sighed: "God gives life. God gives dying. How much longer can it last?—"

This had happened in the autumn, and since then the two other great events in the life of the Blum family—the chimney fire ten years ago, and the death of old Mr. Blum twenty years ago had receded into the background. The old woman was operated on—of course, at the young gentleman's expense—and the doctor

was able to state very cheerfully that, contrary to his expectation, the operation on one eye had been successful. He had discovered on later examination that it had been left too late for an operation, and he had feared the worst. But he had saved the sight of one eye for the old woman, and now she was sitting again in her pay box, with a black bandage over the blinded eye, and she was quite happy. For the better-class customers, the ladies, the scrupulously orthodox, wealthy Jewesses and wives of Rabbis were now exceptionally kind to old Mrs. Blum, as if the black bandage made her almost one of themselves. And the old pedlars gave her no more trouble when it came to paying. Though they demonstrated their faith in her diminished power of sight by tendering mostly copper kreutzers instead of silver ten kreutzer pieces. And at the same time they inquired courteously and respectfully about her health.

"God knows what He is doing. The world is not so lovely, Mrs. Blum. One sees enough with one eye," Mr. Golddust used to say.

But the one eye grew worse and worse ; and one day the doctor had to confess with a disquieting mixture of hopeful cheeriness and pity in his voice that "as he had feared," glaucoma had attacked the successfully-operated eye. "Oh, a most common occurrence." There was a second operation. The other eye, too—"so that it should not be infected," which was to the old woman a matter of indifference, since she couldn't see through it, anyhow. It was nevertheless infected, and operated on again.

And when Autumn again swept the brown, curled-up leaves of the nut-tree through the yard, old Mrs. Blum was totally blind.

Now, wrapped in her blue shawl, she crouched, always freezing, in a corner of the sofa, at the fireside ; and in the pay-box Rose was waging fierce combats with the pedlars. The old woman had become quite apathetic. She never complained, not even about her pains ; she wanted no visits, and she listened without saying a word and with so much indifference to the small talk with which people tried to entertain her, that the neighbours withdrew in confusion. She pushed even little Leo aside if he clambered up to her on the sofa and wanted to be nice to her. Her children were worried about ■ and could not understand her.

The old woman felt ashamed. She who had been so proud of the slightest pain was terribly ashamed of being blind. She

## THE OLD HOUSE

would not move, so that people should not notice by her awkwardness that she could not find her way about the room. It was frightfully humiliating to tap her way across to the stove, lean against it as she used to do of old, and then find that she was standing against the chest at the other end of the room. It was saddening and yet ridiculous not to know what the weather outside was like—not to know whether it was still light or whether the girl already had to put the lamp on. Above all, it was impossible to ask who was in the room. So the old woman sat silent and impassive at the end of the sofa. Often she muttered to herself : "Why has God punished me like this? Why doesn't He let me die?"

This seemed to be the only thought that had been left in the dull old brain after all the pain and excitement of the past year. But it was not.

The old woman had a lot to learn and to think. She learnt to judge by carefully counting the strokes of the hoarse-voiced old clock whether it was still day, or evening had arrived. She learnt to distinguish the footsteps of her children, and their various ways of shutting doors. She heard the rain patter against the windows, and she knew by the difference in the crackling of the fire when it was necessary to put on more coal. She listened to the sounds in the street below, where she had not set foot for years—on account of her "pains," as she said—and she sought to picture to herself the great city over on the other side of the river. A picture that was shrill, miscoloured and undefined like the clanging of the street-cars, the whistling and the grinding brakes of the underground train about which she had been told amazing tales, and the shouting and hammering on a new building. She heard in the long, sleepless nights how the ancient furniture began to creak and wheeze, seeming to tell each other extraordinary tales, how the night-light spluttered and resignedly went out ; how a bolster was being shifted in the next room. And she knew that the wind was raging outside, that restless shadows were gliding along the walls, and drowning in the darkness ; and that her son lay sleepless, like herself.

When the old woman was alone in the room she went about, backwards and forwards, with slow, uncertain steps, feeling the old furniture—tense interest in her compressed lips—and recognised every bit of the carvings, long familiar and yet never before noticed.

One day, little Leo clambered up to her on the sofa, chattered a bit, and then was silent. And when the Grandmother realised by his regular breathing that, tired out by his play, he had fallen asleep, she drew her hands tenderly, gently, quickly over his body. He had grown bigger, broader, he no longer wore a sailor suit, and instead of his short, bristly locks he had a smart fringe combed back on his forehead. This fringe the old woman fingered several times, and there was a shamed smile on her face. And when the little one awoke, she asked him gently, with some embarrassment: "Tell me, Leo, what is the colour of your suit?"

Then she sat there for a long time, musing, trying to conjure up a picture of this changed, grown-up Leo, who wore a grey suit like an adult, and had a student's fringe.

That evening, the old woman complained again for the first time of her pains—in the chest, here, near the arm, cramps—something terrible, painful. When the young gentleman came home he found his mother groaning and making him swear not to forsake his sister when she had died.

The whole family breathed again when they heard these sorely-missed words, and the phrase—"More work to do! See you later, Mrs. Blum," sounded more cheery to-day, free from the sense of oppression and guilt that had weighed it down all that long past year.

"She swi, tu al, il al——" muttered Leo to himself. Then came a baffled pause.

"Nous," prompted the old Grandmother a little angrily. "Nusawong, wusawee, ilsong," Leo rattled off, relieved.

"Leo," the old woman remarked, "I did not go to grammar-school, and I did not study. I learnt French when I was fourteen, while on a visit to my aunt in the town. But I still know more to-day than you do."

Leo was taken aback. "But—nusawong?" he began again, abashed.

"We are now up to 'eiter,' not 'awong,'" his Grandmother broke in gruffly, "and you are a donkey."

"She swi," Leo started off again hurriedly, and this time it went like clockwork.

"Did you ever!" said Mr. Golddust, who was standing in

amazement beside the green bench. "We are only just finding it out, Mrs. Blum. An education like a princess!"

The old woman smiled happily, flattered, and started talking about the riches and glories in which she had spent her youth. Since this black wall had gone up between her and the present, broken only by the voices of those about her, and the life around her went on as if at a distance, Mrs. Blum spoke often of her youth. She had grown completely reconciled to her blindness in the five years that had since passed over the little yard and the big world on the other side of the river.

She sat in summer on the green bench and in winter at the end of the sofa by the stove, and summer and winter she had the pleasant feeling that she was a most distinguished personage. That which at first had seemed to her a severe punishment inflicted by the hand of God, was seen after a time to be a distinction that lifted her above the crowd of others.

The old woman now made her way with assurance about the house that was familiar ground to her for forty years. In the yard she knew every stone, and she adroitly manoeuvred to avoid the green puddles that for ever spread their turgid mirrors about the mouth of the drainpipe. She often walked about the yard, with groping hands stretched in front of her, scornfully rejecting all assistance, with deaf Karl, the bedraggled caretaker-woman, and anybody else who happened to be there admiring her skill for the thousandth time. But her greatest delight was to bewilder the old pedlars who were regular customers of the baths for the last forty years by recognising them by their voices. And since she had once heard little Leo learning his French lesson, and her modest knowledge of the language, frozen for sixty years, had thawed, she had attained the height of happiness. Little Leo had meanwhile grown to be a big, broad-limbed youth—and even if the Grandmother had not been told this, she would have known it by his voice, that kept jumping bravely from deep bass to a shrill treble. But the old woman couldn't imagine the boy otherwise than little and droll, and with a cheerful, snub-nosed, childish tousle-head—as he had looked the day she lost her sight.

Little Leo was all that had changed in the old house, and the Grandmother was embarrassed and did not quite know how to behave to him. But it could surely not do any harm to say forty times a day—"Go and do your French lesson—you got three

kreutzer last time." And when she afterwards examined him, and corrected his mistakes, while the others stood around in silent admiration, she said proudly : " I am old and blind, and I am still worth more than all of you."

And life was calm and happy, in spite of the " aches and pains " and the " attacks " which now were real enough, caused by the hardening of her arteries. But one day something happened that none of the people who lived in the old house or came to visit there could ever have thought possible ; something was going to be done that no one could have imagined, could have dreamt of for a moment.

A young and very elegant gentleman, such as had never before put his foot inside that old house, came through the gaily-coloured glass door—like anyone else—avoided the pool at the mouth of the drainpipe with a gesture of annoyance, and asked for the caretaker's rooms. Then he had everybody who lived in the house summoned—which was quite unnecessary, because they had not waited for the summons, and had already all collected at the centre of the house, the green bench. The young gentleman explained that he had " inherited the house, that he was going to tear it down, and "—here he swept the gloomy, smelly structure with a contemptuous glance—" rebuild it in a different and more desirable form. The baths, too, would by the decision of the Jewish Community, be rebuilt and equipped with all the latest improvements. And consequently he asked the tenants to vacate the premises before the quarter." Then the young gentleman bowed stiffly, and with a gesture of annoyance when he came to the mouth of the drainpipe, he went out through the gaily-coloured glass door.

It seemed that none of the tenants had grasped the drift of his speech. While the landlord of the house was still ascending the last of the well-worn steps, while he was still clambering into his carriage and then drove away in the direction of the elegant, noisy city on the other side of the river, there hung an embarrassed, fearful silence over the gloomy yard. But it is impossible to describe the shrieking and weeping that filled every corner of the house once the immediate shock had passed. Karl made most noise, perhaps because he was deaf and he kept the little tea-garden at the gate, perhaps because without it he would not be able to pay his next rent

But old Mrs. Blum had not said a single word. Nor did she, notwithstanding the young gentleman's fears, have an "attack" that evening. It was altogether a strange evening. Since the chimney-stack fire eighteen years ago, it was the first time the young gentleman did not have "to go to do some work," but stayed at home, making plans with the rest, and putting forward assumptions tending to suggest that a new, bright mikveh, equipped with up-to-date comforts, would not be the right thing, and would bring only disadvantage both to the keeper and the customers.

The old woman listened quietly, and uneasily fingered the carving on her chair. Once she said: "What can you see! What does it all matter to you! But how about me! How can I start again in a new house!" There was something so hopeless in her voice that the others were stunned for a moment. Then they all spoke at once at the old woman, and her dull, "Well, what does it matter, after all. How much longer can it last?" was submerged in the excited whirl of words.

How paltry in comparison was the chimney-stack fire of eighteen years ago, how natural the death of old Mr. Blum thirty years ago. It was even incredible that there had been so much excitement about her losing her sight. How insignificant were all these things compared with this unexpected, unthinkable, impossible happening!

The hoarse-voiced, ancient clock struck midnight when the Blum family retired. The wind rushed over the house in heavy gusts from the river and made the windows rattle fearfully; the night-light spluttered, and the clock cleared its throat, and in the silence struck one quarter after the other. They all lay still, but no one slept. And that was why they all, frightened and somewhat horrified, heard the old woman weeping, helplessly, solitary, as she had never wept since the death of old Mr. Blum.

When the old woman appeared next morning at the common breakfast table in the kitchen, she was strangely altered.

"Madame Blum, your toilet is sadly deficient," the young gentleman chaffed her cheerily. "You have forgotten your wig."

The young gentleman had soon comprehended that his mother looked so ill and worn because, instead of wearing her grey wig,

her old face was now framed only by a few scanty threads of bleached yellow hair. The old woman did not answer a word, and when little Leo placed the wig on her head she did not seem to notice it at all. And notwithstanding the improvement, her face retained its depressing, troubled expression. It was probably due to the exceptionally yellowish light that the misty morning was reluctantly hurling against the windows.

"Are you in pain, mother?" the young gentleman tried to be pleasant to her. But he received no answer.

"So long, Madame Blum," he said meekly, and went out shaking his head.

Madame Blum listened tensely as he banged the door behind him, and clattered down the stairs. Then she heard him walking along the yard, whistling "Margaret, Margaret, sweetest girl I've ever met, Mar-ga-ret."

The sound of the gaily-coloured glass door closing behind him cut the song off and then it was quiet.

The old woman fingered the fringes of the table cloth, wove them into little plaits—such as ruined the linen, and for doing which little Leo had often got his knuckles rapped. Then she counted the plaits—there were seventeen. "Dix sept," murmured Mrs. Blum, and went with cautious step into the room.

Scraggy Rose looked after her, shaking her head, and said: "Listen, Leo! Go in to your Grandmother. I've got to go to market to buy some things."

She took down the old, big-bellied basket from its peg, and threw a worried glance into the room. The old woman had taken the old silver cup from the sideboard and put it down on the table, and now she was groping over the old table-cloth, without being able to find it again. Rose shook her head again, and went out.

"Mother's awfully cut up," she said to the caretaker, "about the house." And she went reflectively down the fourteen worn steps, in whose crevices stood little pools, in which chirpy sparrows were bathing.

"Leo," said his Grandmother when she heard the boy's footsteps in the room, "go and learn your French. You got another three kreutzer last time."

"Leo," she went on immediately, when she heard him rummaging among his books, "Leo, we are to move out of here into a new house." There was anguish in her voice.

"I'm ever so glad," said Leo.

"You? You're glad? Yes, you can be glad. But what about me?"

There was profound silence in the room, and the rapid ticking of the old clock timidly pierced the silence. Then the whistle of the underground train crashed shrilly against the window, and a tremor went through the old woman's body.

"That's what it's like outside—in a new house," she said.

"Leo, push the table over to the window," she ordered him. "And move the chair, too, anywhere you wish. So. And now, go into the kitchen. Do you hear me! Go!"

Leo timidly slipped out. Everything was so strange to-day. What did Grandmother want? He stepped quietly back to the door of the room, and looked in. Mrs. Blum was feeling about the walls, knocked against the moved furniture, could not find herself, muttered something, and there was something terrible in the old face.

"I can't find my way—Leo—I can't find my way—I can't find anything, Leo—come to me!"

The boy went over to her, and she drew her trembling hands over his fringe, and his bony hands.

"Go and do your lessons," she said. "Go and do your French lessons. Leo, stay here—no, go, go!" She held him with one hand and pushed him away with the other.

Then she stood up awkwardly, and with cautious steps and less surely than usual, she went through the kitchen to the stairs.

As far as the stairs she had often walked alone. She stopped at the top flight and breathed heavily.

"God gives life, God gives dying," she murmured. And anxiously gripping the banisters, she felt her way down the stairs.

Old Karl was standing in the yard, and he pulled his cap to her, but the old woman could not see that.

She knew by the thick, green smell of onions that she was passing the mouth of the drainpipe; then came the big brick against which little Leo had once knocked his head and got a big bump. After that was a dip in which the grey rain-water used to collect. Then three steps up, and the wet mouldy air of the bath-house caught up the old woman.

In one of the cabins she heard—ping-ping-ping—water dripping

into an empty tin bath. The glass door rattled in the yard and then there came through the window the voice of a workman :  
" Margaret, Margaret. Loveliest girl I've ever met."

" God gives life, God gives dying," said Mrs. Blum as she opened the door to the mouldy-smelling cistern room. " How much longer can it last ? "

An hour later she was found drowned in the shallow cistern.

## SAVERIO'S SECRET

By FRANZ WERFEL

*Translated by* JOSEPH LEFTWICH

Franz Werfel, born 1890, in Prague. The most important living poet in German. Recognised as one of the most significant writers of this generation. His "Goat Song" is one of the most powerful works in literature. Power is the great quality of Werfel in all his work, power and a glowing faith, that marks him out as a visionary. His play "Paul Among the Jews" gave rise to a rumour that he had abandoned Judaism, which Werfel immediately and categorically denied, making a new avowal of his Judaism. He is profoundly religious, and a determined opponent of materialism. He sees godlessness and materialism as the source of present day chauvinist belligerent nationalism, and what he terms the twin authors of destruction, Bolshevism and Swastika antisemitic National Socialism.

"I, as a Jew," he says, "look to the salvation of the world to come from a revival of real Christianity."

"Saverio's Secret" was selected by Werfel for inclusion in this volume.

MONDHAUS, the art connoisseur, squinted. Like every other affliction, doubtless corresponding to something in his character, it not only made him an unsympathetic person, but if one had anything to do with him, it produced a queer embarrassment. A sincere heart to heart talk with Mondhaus was impossible, for his squint always made you feel that there was a third person present. His quick monotonous talk was to a hair like an old-fashioned stage aside.

For the rest, Mondhaus was an expert on "Austrian Baroque," but I wouldn't swear for it. He might just as easily be an expert on "Peasant Glass Painting" or "Early Gothic." Besides this scientific activity he wrote articles for a number of papers under the heading "Italian Letters," and he knew how to turn such varied ingredients as murders, art exhibitions, political gatherings, sport meetings, sensational crimes, opera first nights, society scandals, social impressions, landscape descriptions, and noble

acquaintances into spicy dishes. He was the embodiment of the man who knew everything.

I had known him for a long time. Who did not know Mondhaus? There were even people who thought highly of his essays. But that afternoon he seemed beyond himself. He looked ■ people and things more eccentrically than ever. His duplicity was intolerable, but one could not get away from it. It is not at all my habit ■ lose control at the sight of old palaces, noble works of art, and weather-beaten old furniture, and to accept any hardships for a chance to have a look at them. I am not boasting of this inappreciation, but it goes to show that I am the reverse of a beauty-intoxicated connoisseur.

But I had been for so many weeks alone in town, had spoken with no human being apart from waiters, porters, and boatmen, that I suddenly remembered the introduction to the painter Saverio, and moved with ennui and hungering for company, I drove out of the town.

When I found that Saverio was not alone, but had a crowd of people in the house, I shrank back. I had grown unaccustomed to conversation, I had lost all ability to mix with people, I felt that terrible oppression which had embittered a great part of my youth. That may have been the reason why I drifted over to Mondhaus, the only person I knew, and he immediately made me the target of his ill-directed gaze and well-directed comment.

He behaved as if he were at home in the place, and at the first opportunity, he drew me aside: "So you have also come to see our treasures." I did not quite understand, but that did not put him out: "Not a bad subject for a psychologist!" he said.

"Whom does he mean?" I wondered, while he made me feel increasingly uncomfortable by tapping my arm as he talked: "Well, first of all, he says he is Italian. But, I ask you, is a man from Trieste (at best from Trieste!) an Italian? Trieste was Austria. And the people in Trieste originally came from Bukovina, the Viennese from Moravia, and vice versa."

Now I knew whom he meant. "Observe his Italian! The same peculiar accent as his German. Have you shaken hands with him? Doesn't he beg your pardon for all he's worth? He knows why, sure enough."

I had, indeed, noticed some exaggeration in Saverio's handshake and greeting. My hand still hurt from the grip, which had been

too firm for even sealing an eternal bond of friendship. And I was a stranger, and my recommendation to him was nothing much. Why had he drawn my hand to his heart, why had he dug his eyes so deep into mine, as though to say : " I know you ! At last we have found each other ! "

Even without Mondhaus I had observed something strained, something false, even pleading, in the cordiality of his greeting, which was exactly the same for every visitor.

Saverio was a burly man. He constantly kept lifting higher his smooth yellowish face, that resembled one of the old Roman heads softened by oppressive fat, as if his gorgeously-clad figure was not tall enough to satisfy him, though it towered above all the rest. This habit of for ever trying to stretch himself upward seemed to be his only indiscretion.

I have never since seen a man whose age it was so difficult to determine. There was not a single streak of grey in his abundant hair. He spoke in succession German, Italian and English. The last only when he turned to the (what a rarity !) stout English-woman, who was like a Chinese mask, or a Tibetan cat with her grey hair parted in the middle and her slanting, stupid smile. I could not agree at all with Mondhaus' criticism. Saverio's way of speaking his languages was rather to my liking, because it seemed detached. It is true that there was some exaggeration, as in his handshake, but his voice was quiet, slightly husky, and its plaintive timbre was pleasant to the ear.

He was entertaining two ladies : mother and daughter. I was astonished at the easy triviality of his compliments, which to my mind were out of keeping with his character. He seemed to be one of those people who think that they must pretend to be in love with every woman they meet. " I wish I were young, so that I could believe there is still hope for me. "

This was to the beautiful, red-haired daughter, who never stopped admiring her own legs.

" What am I to do with the chair on which you are sitting ? "

That to the beautiful mother, who laughed at the tasteless stupidity, but her shoulders showed that she was pleased. (The same lady said to a friend years later : " This Saverio was an interesting fellow, but he simply did not exist as a man. Not for me at least. " But the daughter did not seem to share this opinion. For one day, Mondhaus claimed, she had come to him

with all her worldly possessions and had thrown herself at him, whereupon Saverio had behaved very nobly, and took her back to her mother. It is only gossip, rumour, and it comes from Mondhaus. But there were a great many rumours about Saverio.)

While Saverio was gently paying compliments, with his eyes straying devoutly over the admirable lines of the ladies, his eyes were yet deeply worried. Often they left the object of admiration, and sought with an air of uncertainty for a judge in this room.

The object of the search seemed present.

I do not want to name the famous, internationally famous painter, who was with us that afternoon. He was a vigorous man of fifty, whose smug squat figure was stuck into a formless sack. Hairy hands with roughly-cut nails, and iron-tipped boots, completed the picture of a sturdy peasant, very much clashing with Saverio's elegance. The celebrity's heavy jaw, his bald pate and black beard, were all strongly reminiscent of a self portrait of Cezanne. I don't want to be nasty, but the resemblance was so pronounced that one might almost call it a plagiarism. But probably it was quite innocent, simply the similarity of similar souls.

He smoked a stubby pipe, stood apart from the rest, examined the walls and what was hung on them very seriously, looked out of the window, screwing up his eyes as he did so, seeming to cut up the view to fit into a picture frame. The only thing we heard from him was his breath, which came loud and with difficulty through his nose. I have often met the famous painter since, but I can't recall having heard fifty words from him. But I have a distinct memory of a very definite grunt, full of personality, which is his way of signifying agreement or disagreement, and I can see his fist, with a huge thumb bent outward, with which he draws enormous hieroglyphics in the air. A painter's gesture.

It was not for entertainment that we were assembled in Saverio's house—the summer palace of some Renaissance nobleman. Very soon the host took us round. I am not going to describe the pictures, sculptures, chests, cupboards, doors, stuffs, brocades, velvets, the treasures of centuries which were arranged so inconspicuously in this house. A thing of art, discovered by chance while strolling through the town, can be ravishing. But chance, the unexpected joy of discovery, are all part of it. But one passes by glorious things in museums with proper admiration and less proper weariness. Saverio's treasures were particularly fine.

Even the famous painter emerged from his self-conscious aloofness when he came to some things. But I scarcely remember a thing, because Saverio himself disquieted and distracted me.

Mondhaus did not stir from my side. He seemed to be terribly afraid of letting a new man go through these rooms innocent and credulous. "Supposing you don't know, neither the house nor the things are his. He is only Barbieri's agent. Sells the things and pretends to be rich and an artist. But that is only the surface : he is a complex character."

I was distressed by this libellous talk. We were after all in the man's house. It didn't matter to me to whom the house and the treasures belonged. I tried to get away. But Mondhaus, seeing that his talk was getting on my nerves, redoubled his efforts. "I want you to understand me. I am enthusiastic about Saverio. He is really unique. I hope you don't consider me a moralist, who is concerned to unmask an adventurer. There is nothing here to unmask ; the whole world knows it. But I think that you are interested in certain cultural manifestations in Italy. Well, I can tell you. I have studied it seriously. Antiques, for instance. Quite an unexplored subject. There's a novel for you ! I'll give you all the details. . . . Nice things, aren't they ? "

Mondhaus put his hand on a noble carving. The gesture seemed out of place, like someone with stubby fingers plucking flowers. Only a man who hates art could have such hands and touch a vital object like that. "Beautiful things ? " he repeated. "Tell me, which is genuine, and which is fake ? Never mind. The experts don't know, nor do the laymen. The people who decide are the museum authorities, and they know least of all. But they do know what their expert opinion fetches in hard cash. . . . I'd pay more for the fakes than the genuine things. How much genius there is in the undetected fakes ! Imagine one of these fellows ; one day he is the elder Bellini, the next day Tintoretto, Mantegna, Carpaccio, Donatello, Michael Angelo. Translate it into literature. What living writer could credibly fake a new Shakespeare play, and get away with it ? And then think how inexhaustible Italy is this last century. Constantly discovering unknown Titians, not to mention the lesser gods, and enabling the dealers and the middlemen to earn hundreds of thousands. Meanwhile, the genius of a faker hides in some hole or other and has to be content with a paltry sum as reward. I

once visited one of these marvellous fellows in his den. It was in Caserta. You never find them in the big towns. . . ."

Even if the other people could not hear Mondhaus, his whispered confidences became annoying to me, and I wanted to pull him up ; " Saverio ■ not only a collector," I said, " but primarily a painter."

Mondhaus tried to look sardonic. " Painter ! I'd swear that he hasn't had a brush in his hand in his life. I even doubt if he could restore a simple picture, such as every other antique dealer in Italy starts his career with. He is as much a painter as you or I. I'm going to draw him out on this subject to-day."

I hurriedly left Mondhaus, and joined the others, who were all standing in front of a woodcarving. It was a very early Pieta, with a stiff Madonna and a crooked Christ, who without any centre of gravity crossed her diagonally. Everyone was carried away. It is the thing to admire the primitives. Even the celebrity grunted and with his thumb in the air indicated the rhythm of the carving.

Mondhaus' gossip had left some poison in me, so that involuntarily I looked Saverio straight in the face. And really—so it then seemed to me—there was something blinking and mendacious about him. He did not look at the Pieta. It seemed to interest him as little as a work of art interests a museum guide, lecturing the visitors, or the things he sells interest a salesman. There was a sanctimonious expression on his face, which seemed to have been automatically switched on, and while his beautiful hands touched the folds of the Madonna's robe with his delicate fingertips, he sighed deeply, as if condoling with us all on the death of somebody we all mourned. " What are we all against that ? "

Mondhaus looked at me. And I, too, was conscious of something exaggerated.

Tea was served in Saverio's studio. Why this room was called the studio I could not discover, unless it was because it was very large and had high windows. It seemed to me more like a music-room. It contained a grand piano, a harmonium, and several gramophones. But no sign of easels, canvases, frames, palettes and the other tools of a painter. But there was in a corner a pile of strapped-up luggage, ready to be removed, which gave the room the appearance of something temporary, created an atmosphere of packing-up and flight.

Why, when there were so many wonderful rooms at his disposal, had we been asked to take our snack in this room, which seemed to substantiate all Mondhaus' suspicions? The alleged painter, our host, showed himself enchantingly amiable. He filled our cups himself, and when I came up for mine, he touched me gently and said how glad he was that I had honoured him by coming. To our celebrity he bowed low, and dropped on one knee, which seemed both humble and eccentric. But Mondhaus got a friendly tap, as if to say, "I know what you tell people about me, but it doesn't do me any harm." He bandied a few pleasantries with mother and daughter, and then he addressed us: "I am glad to have you all here, for to-morrow I leave." And he pointed to his trunks.

Everybody wanted to know where he was going. "Switzerland has snow already. I'm awfully keen on ski-ing, so I am going to Arosa."

Mondhaus, who sat next to me, nudged me and whispered in my ear: "Not a word of truth! This means three weeks of banishment in Treviso, pretending that he is at Arosa. I know it. We get the same tale every year."

I looked at Saverio, to find some way of explaining this absurd bluff. Did the owner of such a palace and such treasures of art need to boast of trivialities that a salesman wouldn't bother about? Of course, he was only an agent here. But it might be a libel; officially, he was the owner. He might have been very poor as a young man, and even the most cultivated people show signs of that afterwards. But his hands were really beautiful, and sensitive. Hands like that could never have known poverty. "Of course, I am not going to Arosa only for sport," he went on. "I have a friend who has a beautiful country place near by. No, you don't know him. He has given me a commission."

Mondhaus' fingers drummed on my knee. Saverio seemed to feel it, for he immediately added, quietly, with a beaten glance at the celebrity: "Alas, we moderns are no longer able to paint frescoes with real conviction. We lack the social background. Heavens, I don't want to talk immodestly in front of our honoured guest. I would die for him. . . . But, you know: Large walls lure a painter. . . ."

Suddenly Mondhaus' voice sang across the room: "Master! You can't escape me this time!"

Saverio turned beetroot.

"For years, you have promised us a collective exhibition. And we have never seen a single one of your pictures," Mondhaus pursued him ruthlessly. "Your friends in Arosa have all the luck. You do large mural paintings for them. But this time, we're not going to let you get away with it."

Saverio looked at the celebrity like a criminal who has heard his death sentence. But the celebrity said nothing, only pulled at his pipe. Then he growled agreement.

Saverio's brow was pallid and damp. He lost all control and stammered: "Impossible! My things are all locked up or put away. I can't. . . ."

Mondhaus quietly insisted: "A painter doesn't pack away and lock up all his pictures."

"I have only a few things here. And they are old and insignificant. I can't. . . ."

"Fairy tales!"

Saverio had not taken his eyes off the great man. "I wouldn't dare in the presence of a master. . . ."

Mondhaus played his trump card: "You ought to be glad to have a man like that to show them to. Our opinion doesn't matter so much."

Saverio bowed his unhappy head in silent despair. Then he said again: "I can't!"

But everyone was insistent now.

Saverio, for whom I trembled, was lost. He got up like a fat old man and went to one of the windows, through which came the darkening light of the late afternoon. He was really having a rough time. Half an hour later and it would have been dusk and no one who appreciates art would have been able to ask him to show any paintings.

Presently one saw that Saverio had come to a decision. But what he did was absolutely unexpected.

Thoughtfully, as if to gain time, he went over to one of the gramophones, wound it up and set the record in motion. Caruso's voice began to sing overpoweringly. But that was not all! The harassed man now started the electric mechanism at the back of the piano, and an *étude*, played by ghostly hands, drowned the mighty song.

It was indescribable. No noise is more horrible, demoniac

than the clashing sound of different kinds of music. Anyone can convince himself of that by standing still for a while in a fair or a Luna Park, with the hurdy-gurdies of several roundabouts reaching him at the same time. Such polyphony is the sounding image of disjointed souls, of madness, of the abyss.

And here it was in a high hall !

What was the intention ? Were our powers of judgment to be impaired ? Did the suffering conscience require such stupefaction ? Was it the way the man turned on his enemies when they had driven him to bay, or was it a pose ? We looked at each other. Even Mondhaus was taken by surprise. Only the famous painter was left completely cold and indifferent. He was like a cool expert, who is not disposed to surrender his reason to a lot of mountebank noise. But I began to hate this lion because of his smug equanimity.

Saverio had meanwhile, without our noticing it, brought out a picture from somewhere. It was a very small framed thing under glass.

He waited, till we had all come round him, then he turned suddenly, so that he stood facing the window. And now with a convulsive movement, he held the picture to the light, pushed it into the golden right-angle of the window.

One saw a black, glassy surface, nothing more.

Everyone kept silent ; only the chaotic music scoffed.

Mondhaus seized Saverio's arm : " Turn round, master, turn round. We can't see it."

But this time the hunted man showed his teeth, and with uncontrolled rage he exclaimed : " You see nothing, man ! That's how it ought to be, like that, so ! so ! "

His sudden fury frightened me. It was so utterly unlike Saverio.

As if to find release and help, he turned, quivering with emotion, to the famous painter. But he had long since moved away. He had looked once at the picture, and then gone wandering about the studio, with his iron-tipped boots ringing on the floor, very much interested in the deafening noise of the gramophone. He stood aloof like embodied sovereignty and disdain. Between that charlatan, holding up a brown stain against the light, and real artistic effort, that reproduces the face of the world in incorruptible colours, between Saverio and himself, there was no bridge.

But in spite of the noisy bawling, in spite of the much noisier and more painful silence I heard a sob in Saverio's throat, and heard his teeth grind passionately.

I could not stand it any longer. Somebody must say something. I would! I went right up to the picture, for I was convinced that Saverio was not fooling us.

At first I saw nothing but my reflection in the dark glass. But I determined to penetrate through my reflection. And indeed it gradually vanished under my concentrated gaze. Slowly, there emerged out of the dark surface, the ghostly face of a man, of such spiritual power, such unique experience of suffering, that even now, writing this years after, I can still call it to mind.

Of course, I am a layman and must bow to the judgment of the experts. But I know what I say. Only one portrait of a man has impressed me in the same way as this head, which for a moment rose out of the indefinite ground of the mirroring glass. It may be a blasphemy, but I can't help that. . . . Rembrandt's King Saul drawing the curtain to his eyes. . . .

Was it painting, trickery, or my own imagination?

I do not know.

But, spellbound, and, simultaneously overjoyed, defying the celebrity, I cried out: "How beautiful it is!"

And behind me Saverio's jubilant voice responded, "Isn't it!"

## II

I had that to thank for Saverio's refusal to let me go with the rest.

While the company took their leave, which was immediately after, he was no longer the man who had sobbed and ground his teeth; he was again the polished host, deploring the premature departure of his friends, especially the two beautiful women. The change was scarcely credible. Even Mondhaus, who had been so spiteful to him, was cordially invited to come again. The famous painter, too, was overwhelmed with gratitude for his visit.

But when it came to my turn, as the last, to go, Saverio, taking my hand, pulled me back into the studio.

We were alone. I must confess that I "expected" something: "the truth" shall we say? I was disillusioned. Saverio ran about the room, exclaiming: "Are there any bigger rascals than artists? Did you observe him?"

He named the celebrity. "There is no pride that can be more diabolical. Did you see how the duffer scorned me because my picture wasn't the right colour? Didn't even look at it! Things like that simply don't exist for him. Muddy colour, he thinks, just as if the French had never lived! How cocksure he is, the narrow-minded fool! He cannot imagine that there is any other way of doing things except his own."

There was an expression of pain in Saverio's face, and he kept running about the room. Then he cried: "Don't you think that I, too, am wrestling?"

It all seemed so exaggerated that I could find no words. And the word "wrestling" seemed out of place. Excitedly, he clutched my arm: "You alone understood me."

Something in my eyes seemed to infuriate him. For he suddenly went quite yellow, and changed his tone: "Are you sure you saw my picture?"

The question bewildered me to such an extent that I did not know (and I don't know to this day) whether I had really seen the picture. But I answered emphatically: "Decidedly."

"Think it over! Would you swear on oath that you saw the head?"

Though I had not overcome my doubts, I looked him straight in the face, and said: "Yes."

"And supposing the head was only suggestion?"

Had it suddenly got into his mind to play the magician, instead of the painter? I laughed: "I am sorry, but I am not a medium. You couldn't do anything with me with suggestion. Though, if you like, you can try it again. Where is the picture?"

He said nothing and switched on the lights so that there was a very unpleasant twilight in the room, for the night was still far off. Then he came right up to me and spoke softly, as if he had something very painful to say: "You are a friend of Herr Mondhaus! And of course Herr Mondhaus has told you that I am not a painter."

I defended myself vigorously: "I am not a friend of Herr Mondhaus. But it is true that he is convinced that you are not a painter."

"And what do you think?"

"I have seen your remarkable picture, and I certainly believe that you painted it."

Saverio did not seem particularly pleased with my confession of faith. Perhaps he distrusted me : " Why do you believe that ? What right have you to believe it ? "

" That is something I cannot answer. "

Saverio was insistent : " Let us imagine, for instance, that I had held up some smoky old pigskin to the light. . . . "

I kept silent. But Saverio brought out the word " friend " to taunt me. " Your friend, Herr Mondhaus, " he said, " has made some more revelations about me. My house is Barbieri's place of business. Eh ? I am a sort of salesman. Eh ? My job is to trap wealthy Americans. Eh ? "

I said that all these things did not interest me. But Saverio kept running up and down the studio, and explained, becoming very unpleasantly sweet again, that unfortunately he was an aesthete and he could not live without being surrounded by beautiful things. And then he gave way to his hate. " How sharp-eyed they are, these Mondhaus ! They see everything there ■ to be seen ! Mondhaus ! Just the right name for him ! Mond—the moon. And the moon sees only one side, doesn't it ? "

" I am a very uneducated man, " he immediately added. " I haven't had much learning. "

That didn't seem credible, either.

He stared at me : " How old are you ? "

" In the early thirties. "

" And you are supposed to be famous ? Eh ? "

I had to laugh. " Of all my troubles, fame worries me least. "

But he was in dead earnest : " I'll tell you what. Try not to be famous till you're forty. And very slowly ! Gradually ! "

" Why do you give me such funny advice ? "

" Why ? Because after that nothing much more can happen to you. Because, my dear sir, it is terrible to have *been* famous. "

The words sounded terribly bombastic, yet I shrank from questioning further. For some incomprehensible reason, he switched off the centre lights, leaving only a remote standard lamp burning, so that the twilight which was now far advanced became more depressing than ever. Then he said, as if to give me courage : " There ■ fame enough left for a poet. Take Dante ! "

The unhappy man described hell, purgatory and paradise, but he did nothing for the forest."

Saverio posed like an old actor and began to recite the opening stanzas of the *Commedia*.

It sounded theatrically insincere, sheer banality, seeming proof that it was not his native tongue. He had just spoken of his lack of education. Now he was trying to convince me—it was quite in keeping with his way of doing things—of the contrary. I suddenly felt that Saverio's misfortune must be physical. But it is difficult to account for such feelings. He had finished his declamation, and he concluded in this way: "What matters to me *Inferno*, *Purgatory* or *Paradise*? I want to hear about the forest, the '*Selva oscura*'! The forest in which everything is the other way round, where every step leads to where there is no way out. Write for us about this forest, my friend. . . ."

He sat down, panting, the declamation had exhausted him. I noticed now that his eyes were unusually small and deep-set. He had not smoked till now, but now he lit a cigarette. He took a Russian cigarette out of a box with a movement that was hasty and guilty, as if he were breaking a vow. After that he smoked incessantly. Gratifying his whole body yearningly with the fumes, he looked at me like a conspirator: "You must be a most credulous person. . . . Still, think just whatever you like."

I suddenly felt sorry for the man. He may have noticed something, for he became rude: "People of twenty and thirty have no business to have any talent. Do you realise how talent kills a man! Take the success of our genius, this celebrity who has just been here? What is behind it? His lack of talent, I tell you. It steels one's energy like a constant cold-water douche. When he was twenty, he must have been an empty-headed plodder, and even now, he still has to exert every ounce he's got in him in order to make the slightest ascent. But he knows his vehicle. He is a painter, painter, painter! He hasn't really lived one single hour. And this constant plodding and toiling of his is the cause of his envious hatred and pride."

He got up in a rage and beat his breast with exaggeration a resounding thump. "Everybody has his tabernacle!"

The shadow of a suspicion came to me. I went right up to Saverio: "I am convinced," I said, "that your strength is still

there. "The head you showed us or rather concealed from us to-day, proves it."

He looked past me : " So you really believe that I am not merely an antique dealer, etc. ? "

He seemed to be wrestling with himself : " I can show you the proofs."

He walked hesitatingly round the writing-table, stopped suddenly, and then tore savagely out of the drawer a yellow-bound booklet, which he held out to me. And he ejaculated rapidly, as if he were confessing something shameful : " Exhibition catalogue ! "

But I had hardly taken hold of the booklet, was just about to read the heading, when he snatched it out of my hand. The same impulsive gesture, the same concealment, the same apparent shame as a little while back with his picture. But fate intervened, and as he snatched away the booklet a piece of paper tore off, and was left in my hand. There was nothing on it beyond the place of publication—Paris—and the final syllable of Saverio's name, which might be equally that of half the surnames of all Italians. The mishap made him feel very pleased. " Have you read it ? " he asked scornfully.

I looked up at him and lied : " I read your name on the title-page ! "

It amused him : " Then everything is all right."

That was too much. I could not keep my temper any longer. " I should like to see your new works," I said.

He went on smiling : " Who told you that I am an artist or ever was one ? "

" But you told me yourself about your commission in Arosa ! "

" And you think that I am going to Arosa ? "

" Why should I doubt it ? "

" And you think that these trunks are packed and ready for the journey ? "

" Naturally ! Otherwise you would not have them in your living room ! "

A foxy and, at the same time, an insane expression crept over Saverio's features, a revolting triumph. He ran up to the luggage, picked up the cases, and tossed them about easily. They fell open, empty.

I caught hold of his hand : " Why do you do that ? Whom are you mystifying ? "

The foxy expression became intensified. He really looked now like a common agent. His thick underlip quivered : " Whom am I mystifying ? Haven't you seen and praised my picture ! Why am I doing it ? Ask Mondhaus ! Mondhaus knows everything ! Everybody knows everything. . . "

Saverio had not been shouting nor had he exerted himself in the least throwing the trunks about the room. And yet something happened that I have never seen in anyone else. Without any reason his brow was covered with beads of perspiration, which ran down his cheeks, and even his dark hair became visibly damp. It was a profuse, inexplicable burst of perspiration. One might say that the man's great body was weeping out of every pore. But he did not seem to be aware of anything. Abruptly and very impolitely he said : " I'm sorry you have to go now ! "

Though I was told so brusquely to clear out, I could not make up my mind to go. What sort of a time would Saverio have when he was left alone !

I have never had a grudge against him on this account.

He had immediately become the polished society gentleman again, he helped me into my coat and seemed very anxious that I should get home safely. He saw me down the stairs. " Thank you," he said. " I've had a charming time, you know."

I was about to give him my hand when I saw a young girl coming up the stairs. I waited, so that I shouldn't run into her on the stairs. But the small and elegant vision mounted the staircase very slowly. I was surprised that a young girl should wear a veil over her face, so strikingly out of fashion. Saverio introduced me, giving her name as the Countess Fagarazzi.

He kissed her hand and asked a little severely why she was so late. The lady threw back her veil, and I saw the enamelled face of an old woman, whose ravages stood out more boldly because of the rigidity and smoothness of the surface. She was going to answer him, but before she had spoken a couple of words, her purple lips were attacked by a kind of St. Vitus' dance ; they crumpled up, turned and twitched all over the place.

It was nothing new to me. As a child I had gone in fear of an old woman who suffered from the same kind of malady. The nursemaids used to say that she had been a wicked gossip and

this was God's judgment. The idea is not so superstitious, when one reflects that it is usually the offending parts of the body that are stricken.

The Countess Fagarazzi seemed to me a tormented woman, who wanted to say something passionate, but could not utter a sound. Saverio watched her for a while with repugnance, then he said: "Go inside!"

She obeyed humbly.

■ bid me good-bye more cordially than ever. But it struck me immediately that he had not asked me to come again, as he had the other guests.

### III

A year and a half later the big "International Art Exhibition" was opened in the Giardini pubblici.

I am not a lover of museums and galleries. A wall<sup>7</sup>hung<sup>7</sup>all over with pictures is pure barbarism. Twenty walls, from each of which twenty landscapes, heads, crucifixions and still-life patterns stare out of their world into ours, which the little top-light does not suffice to enchant. Twenty kinds of colour vie with each other in darting their rays at the stunned spectator; a fierce battle in which the innocent falls victim. Twenty souls, delicate, radiant, impertinent, voluptuous, and full of hate sing their song side by side, and the market-day din of all these clashing colours makes even the most sensitive want to shout more loudly. One would often like to shut these windows to another world with an angry bang, but one doesn't even manage to get one's glance away to an empty part of the wall.

But things are quite different on the opening day of an<sup>7</sup>art exhibition. It is like the first night at a theatre.

What do we care about art? What matters to us the striving, the wrestling of all these painters, who, unrecognised, battle their way through the crowd in the faint hope of reaping their reward now, and not at some better future time. We glance indolently at this and the other picture and wait to see if its colouring responds to the question in us.

But the blue, golden spring day outside is more important, and more important, too, ■ the sad twitching in our limbs, for we know that we are a year older, and we are already beginning to count the time.

The crowd turns us, as water turns a fallen leaf. We shut our eyes and inhale through the mist of oil and scent the cinnamon and wine perfume of women. And to the women, too, the hat and dress they are wearing for the first time, are more important than all the art and all the wrestling with problems.

But we open our eyes again and gather the fair or dark flowers from the calyx of the women.

I had strayed into the Belgian pavilion, into the large central hall, where there was the collection of the famous painter, whose name I am not going to mention for obvious reasons. "A painter, painter, painter!" I thought of Saverio's words. It was true. A very limited, yet exuberant life was here offered up to art without rest or reservations. It shone off the walls like reborn sunlight.

What happened next did not take me by surprise. On the contrary, I had been wondering why I had been spared so long. I suddenly had an unpleasant feeling in my spine. I beg pardon for the expression, but it is true; I felt a squint behind me. Mondhaus had caught me.

"Quality! Eh!" he cried and linked his arm in mine. Unfortunately I am—it is a weakness for which I am always reproaching myself—defenceless against deliberate importunity. Worse still! Impudent people like Mondhaus paralyse me; they make me, struggle as I may against the snare, accomplices in their vulgarity. So that I failed to release myself from his arm. I, who don't know a thing about painting, had to go through this room, arm in arm with Mondhaus who thought he was in his element. He must have been commissioned to do a report of the exhibition, and wanted to try out his feuilleton-like ideas on me. It was characteristic of him that, as he talked of the pictures, he scarcely glanced at them. "Wonderful! Ten years of gigantic work. What this square skull manages to squeeze out! Incredible! You really see the biceps of his will. And now he has even got its architecture. My dear friend, he doesn't worry about expressionism, cubism, futurism, neo-classicism. He simply hasn't any nerves. He goes on like a carthorse with his iron-shod hoofs. . . ."

Suddenly Mondhaus stopped short: "Between ourselves, don't you find this type of art tedious? These striking portraits of human-face battlegrounds! These temperamental landscapes!

The eternal still life with the slanting table-top à la Cézanne. These polychrome posteriors of cowlike women! The man belongs right back to the generation which thought it a great thing to shout its conviction in the face of the world that a well-painted onion is better than a fairly well-painted Madonna. That time is gone for ever."

Mondhaus must have noticed that his clever talk and coffee-house witticisms were getting on my nerves, so he got excited. "But, of course, a trumpery Madonna is more valuable than the most wonderful onion! 'Absolute art' is finished. We don't care a fig for the aesthetic worries of these people. 'Art,' 'personality,' 'originality,' that is all miserable nineteenth-century stuff, just as 'sensitiveness,' and 'virtue' were eighteenth century. Yesterday's ideals smell abominably. Now comes. . ."

He tapped his lips: "Do you know that Saverio is in San Clemente?"

"San Clemente?"

"Yes, Saverio is shut up. In the asylum! Hopeless case!"

I threw off his arm. But he squinted at me in a superior manner: "Do you remember what I told you all that time ago? Now who was right? He took us in properly. He never went to Switzerland, but. . ."

"To Treviso. . ."

"Treviso? Why Treviso? Anyway, Treviso or somewhere else, it doesn't matter. He vanished for a while, went into retreat, and wrestled like a mad thing."

"How do you know that?"

"You can always depend on me!"

"And it is quite hopeless?"

Mondhaus settled Saverio's fate with a gesture. And immediately his complacency returned: "I ought to be very proud of myself. He took everybody in, except me. Do you remember what I said? Of course the house wasn't his. . ."

"And he was Barbieri's agent?"

Mondhaus tried to look sympathetic. "It isn't as simple as all that. He played the host in order to make us believe by his bad acting that he was the agent. But Barbieri swears that he never had a thing to do with the sale of a single article, and that in fact he rather tried to prevent anything being sold. Saverio being put away must be a stroke of luck for the old man's business.

As I see it, Barbieri gave him a home, for some reason, which is still to be discovered, and in return Saverio had to show people round. You know that men like Barbieri like to put a veil of mystery over their possessions. So that he must have been delighted to find a man whose great quality was putting a veil over everything. But you haven't any idea how Saverio lived. I have my people who tell me everything. That's what I am a journalist for. The porter is my authority in this matter. Now, Saverio didn't live in the fine rooms of the Palace, nor yet in the studio, but he lived in a miserable little servant's room up in the roof. He usually cooked his food himself on a spirit lamp. And do you know what he slept on? A plank-bed covered with two horse blankets! That is irrefutable fact!"

I wanted to put a question. But Mondhaus brooked no interruption. "You want to know why he lived like that? Be patient! My informants have already told me that the poor of half the area lived on him. Think of that! He played the elegant and lived like a Trappist. He himself needed not a soldo, and he had pots of money! Now comes the most important thing of all. He behaved as if he were pretending, posing to be a painter. And everybody was taken in. I always knew it. You were there when I made him bring out that little dark picture. Unfortunately I have been very busy this year, or I should have cleared it all up before the catastrophe. You can act witness to the fact that I was on the right track. Saverio ■ an artist. And what an artist!"

That was too much. I lost my temper. "I am a witness? To what? To the fact that you were thoroughly taken in. You told me that Saverio was as much a painter as you or I."

Mondhaus looked concerned, as if he were not sure of my sanity. Then he said slowly: "You are an author and you let your imagination run away with you."

I still feel mad every time I think of the impertinence. Mondhaus shrank back, frightened: "That won't make poor Saverio any better," he said. "He worked like a madman. He will leave a huge collection behind him. I have been told of hundreds of canvases, and ever so many drawings and statues. The thing will have to be worked very carefully so that the prices shouldn't be forced down by unloading too many at once. . . ."

It was dreadful. The poor man was still alive, and here was

this fellow calculating the market value of his effects. We had got into the Hungarian pavilion, I don't know how. But I saw neither the colouring of the women nor the colouring of the pictures. It depressed me, it hurt me, that Mondhaus should have seen Saverio's works. I asked him about them. He was astonished: "Seen them? I think you underestimate Barbieri and the Countess Fagarazzi. As for Fagarazzi, I pledge myself to find out within a few days whether Saverio is really married to her, whether she was his mistress or whether he only confided in her. You know, of course, that she is French and not Italian. Saverio might have known her in Paris, before she married Fagarazzi. But I'm sure you don't know how she got that affliction of hers. She couldn't speak at all for two years. It isn't exactly one of the delights of life to cut down your husband from the window sash-cord on which he has hanged himself. . . ."

We were now in the Polish pavilion. I knew it by the names of the painters inscribed on little blocks beneath the pictures. Mondhaus hadn't stopped chattering for a minute. "Do you want to know any more about Saverio's art? Saverio did not bother about 'art.' To him it was only a language of expression, of communication, which he happened to know. He was left quite cold by the analytical rapture of our generation. The subject was the thing to him! The subject! Paris has known that for a long time now. You will find it in all the little shop windows in the rue de la Boétie, that magic realism which is the new word. No more painting for painting's sake, no more analysing, no more distortions, but the things themselves, as they are and what they say, and yet at the same time their life beyond. . . ."

This precipitous feuilleton, that went flowing on without any effort, gave me a headache. And yet I couldn't run away. Mondhaus became pathetic now: "And that is how Saverio painted twenty years ago. Don't think that I am talking only by intuition. There is a forgotten pamphlet about him. He himself arranged for it to disappear. But what sort of a writer on art would I be if I couldn't hunt up a forgotten pamphlet? It may be useful one day as the basis of a book of my own. It is the catalogue of an exhibition. Here it is! Look!"

And he handed me the identical yellow booklet, with part of the title-page torn off. The rest of the name was ~~not~~ Saverio's.

Mondhaus beamed like a detective who has just brought off a coup. "Saverio's present name is a pseudonym. That is police information. Whether this is his real, original name, which I do not believe, is still to be established. But the illustrations have been identified. We are coming to the main point of my hypothesis."

Another name! So that was why Saverio had torn the evidence that he was an artist out of my hands! Why does a man change his name? There are many reasons: running away from one's origin, for instance. Mondhaus took up my thoughts: "The first name is very little different from the second. That makes one think. About twenty years ago the first name enjoyed a certain amount of fame in artistic circles in Paris. The similarity of the two shows that Saverio found it hard to give up his fame. But he did so or had to do so. . . . What do you think?"

I stared at the torn title-page. I read the words "Exposition," "Oeuvre," "Paris," the mutilated name; they all told me nothing. Mondhaus prattled on: "I am not going to anticipate my own researches. But there is no longer any doubt that there is a break, a dark patch in Saverio's life. He must have something on his conscience; I deduce something dishonourable, criminal. . . ."

I saw clearly a whitewashed attic with a plank bed. Mondhaus asked: "Wouldn't you like to see the reproductions?"

I was on the point of opening the catalogue. But at the last moment I held back; I could not take from these shameless hands what Saverio's shame-filled will had refused me. I hastily handed back the little book, bowed abruptly and left Mondhaus standing there.

When one left these solemn, quiet rooms one was overpowered by merciless light. Music radiated from its own pavilion complacent, tinny harmonies into the yellow warmth of the Spring sun. Bright dresses, legs, hats, sunshades were thick on the paths, like the coloured circles and spots in front of one's eyes as one is dropping off to sleep. Even the lagoon was a vast reflecting mirror. I lost consciousness and came to in the streets.

Yet even in the shade I did not really want to come round. It was fine not to have to think, just to breathe happily and to bathe one's reeling person in life. I strayed through the town, in many byways; I forgot my meal-time.

Finally I found myself on the landing-stage where the steamers leave for F. And then I knew that I had only been taking a long way round. For I had been seized by a great yearning to learn Saverio's secret from his pictures. It had nothing to do with interest in art or psychological curiosity—I haven't much of either—it was profound unrest, a kind of hunger in me which insisted on obtaining satisfaction, as if my whole being were in some painful connection with Saverio. I wanted to still that yearning, now, at once. By to-morrow it might have lost strength. And I was sorry for it.

Mondhaus had not really touched on the riddle. He had perhaps glanced at a few facts, but only glanced at them. He had merely replaced grosser errors by lesser, but nothing more. He had himself confessed that what he knew he had from others. His assumption that Saverio had changed his name because he had committed a crime which made his own impossible, appealed to me for a moment. But I soon detected in the theory the spirit of the romantic reporter, who wrote *Letters from Italy*. If Saverio had really slept on a plank bed in his palace and lived in secret as an ascetic, it must have been self-condemnation. But this word, too, only leads into a new labyrinth. I was now convinced that the only way to find out the truth was to see Saverio's work. I was almost sorry that I had given him back the catalogue. But I did not doubt that so far as his tireless work was concerned, Mondhaus was correctly informed and that I should find this work in Barbieri's palace.

It was pretty late when I asked my way to the house on the other side of the lagoon. I could not expect any better light than that in which Saverio had that last time hidden away his picture. At every step I took, I felt myself becoming more uneasy. As if Saverio, in his sick room in San Clemente, were sending out power against me, putting up barriers to prevent me crossing over the boundaries that he set. He had not invited me to visit him again. And he seemed to hold to that attitude. But I determined not to turn back, to circumvent the interdiction and whomever I found in the house beg insistently that I should be allowed to see his pictures. I must admit that I had to exert a humiliating amount of effort before I had the courage for such a decision. But I have never found ■ easy to enter a strange house. Even now, my heart beats rapidly if I have to ring at the door of a house I don't know.

There was a fairly large garden in front of the house, which seemed badly neglected that year. But before I could think any further about that, I saw a group of unusual figures at the front door.

A long, lanky fellow was talking and swearing in a high-pitched, eunuch-like voice. When I came nearer I saw that he was blind. He jerkily moved his parchment-like face on a restless stem of a neck, here and there, and his pale mother-of-pearl pupils quivered despairingly. The brown uniform jacket of some blind or invalid institution was much too short for his huge arms. Behind him stood an old woman, probably his guide, with a concertina slung over her shoulders, and a couple of street urchins to whom the hullabaloo seemed funny.

The poor fellow was arguing with a lad in shirtsleeves who stood in the doorway and gave the impression of one who had attained to the office and honour of dealing with rowdies. He calmly parried the complaints of the blind man, who in his high pitched voice seemed to be insisting on some claim he had. I repeatedly heard the word "Padrone." What the old Padrone had given, the new one must give, too, and he ought to be pleased that he was not asked for more, as was only right and proper. There must be order about these things, and he was not going to be done out of his due, the blind man screamed.

The apparent factotum thereupon declared that the crazy game was finished now, and he would see to it that things were thoroughly overhauled. The calamity seemed to be turning out a going concern! He, too, was a poor man and nobody gave him his food, he had to work hard for it all day long, and all he got for it was a weak lung, no pay.

The lanky fellow started jabbering again. To stop him the boy stuck a Macedonian cigarette between his lips. And he puffed away at it greedily, smoking and talking at the same time, in his high-pitched, querulous voice.

In my ears rang the words: "The poor of half the district lived on him."

Or was he a model?

Somebody in the house called "Toni!"

The boy disappeared in the doorway.

I followed.

## IV

Barbieri, the antique dealer, stood on the stairs. An alert old man, with his hat on the back of his head, fidgeting nervously with an ebony walking-stick, whose silver knob was formed into a woman's nude bust. When he supported his weight on the stick, his thick index-finger rested comfortably between the silver breasts, and gave the onlooker the sight of a signet ring as large as the Cardinal's hoop of the Patriarch of Venice. Sometimes he thrust his hand, and the handle of the stick into his trouser pocket, and discontentedly pulled and tugged his clothing about, as if there wasn't enough room in them for his animated body. He spoke very rapidly and in many different pitches, with a husky voice, that, like most voices of Italian men, however, had at bottom a musical vibration.

He received me with a flourish : " Professore ! It is charming of you to remember old Barbieri. A welcome visit ! I'd rather have you here than a hundred of these terrible dollarites. . . . Come inside ! " I had never before met Barbieri. So that he must have confused me with someone else. How characteristic was of the whole muddled affair that I, who had come out to discover who Saverio was, should myself be mistaken for somebody else. The antique-dealer did not let go of my hand, and turned furiously on the boy, who was standing unabashed at the foot of the stairs : " Toni ! Thief ! Rascal ! Where did you get to ? "

Toni very deliberately lit a Macedonian cigarette before he answered : " There is somebody outside, who has come for his pension, because it's the first of May. "

Barbieri fumed : " I shall call the police . . . you. . . . "

Toni stared hard at the cigarette, as if he didn't care for the taste of it, then he gently spat out a bit of tobacco and at the same time put out his hand : " Give me ! "

Barbieri was in torment : " Give ! Give ! . . . Oh, Professore, it goes on like that all day. On all sides nothing but : Give ! Give ! . . . " And he handed over a five-lire note.

Then he looked at me like a fellow conspirator : " That's what the demon has done for me. (*Questo demonio insuperabile !*) Give ! Give ! And you know, Professore, that I was always like a father to him. "

I gathered that he meant Saverio. "He was like my own son. What am I to do? I have got seven women at home; five daughters, my wife and my sister-in-law. Seven women, and no service, no comfort. Imagine a table at which seven women sit gossiping, squabbling, quarrelling, weeping whenever there's the least excuse for it, jumping up, sitting down, running out and coming back! Who can stand it? Think what a life I've got! All day long: Give! give! And I must find the money! But for whom and why? Nothing but women! And I looked after him like a son, the hostile demon! Now he's got what he deserves! You young people, you . . ."

He flung out his arms, as if he saw his trouble now for the first time: "Professore! Look at this house! Nothing but expenses and expenses. . . . How much longer can I carry the burden? And in the end seven women will wear it all on their bodies as pearls and dresses."

The Palazzo was really unrecognisable. There was mud on the stairs, pails of whitewash stood about, sawdust was heaped up in every corner, and in the hall lay a couple of huge blocks of granite.

Reconstruction! I knew that Barbieri was notorious for his passion for reconstruction. He was always buying up old palaces, pulling them half down, restoring, ruining, carting away, putting in additions, jumbling together all sorts of styles to his heart's content, and then when his fury was spent, he would get rid of them. This crazy way of doing business made the whole world stare. One never knew if Barbieri was fabulously wealthy or bankrupt.

He now looked at the desolation, with an expression of pain.

"It costs money and money, Professore! And I have no son to help me in the battle with vulgarity. Poor Saverio! His friends come to me day and night with reproaches. You, too, are his friend, Professore! Naturally! I tell you the world is full of spies. Especially in our profession. But you can rest assured that Saverio ■ well looked after. He lacks nothing. He is provided for. Next week I shall put him into a private asylum. I'll bet you he will be cured. . . . As if I had not arranged for him for life! I even keep his old mother! She comes from the same place as I do. In Tuscany . . ."

What a pack of lies ! Saverio was certainly not an Italian. There Mondhaus was right.

Barbieri poked his stick about in the disorder, and shouted oaths and orders down to Toni and other invisible domestics. No one came. I tried to explain what I had come for. To guard against any blunder I might make, I gave the old man a title : "Commendatore ! I have come to see Saverio's pictures." •

He put his hand to his ear : "What's that ? Speak up, please ! " I repeated my request.

He listened with an effort. Then he described a large circle with his stick. "Pictures ? Of course ! You honour me. I'll show you everything I possess. You are a scholar, Professore ! "

Had he understood me ?

Very stupidly I suddenly said that I was interested in modern art. I thought that might lessen the impression that I had Saverio in mind.

Barbieri looked hurt. "What art ? "

"Modern art ! "

That made him angry : "Modern art ? What is that ? A few dolts in Paris, who are so stupid that people think them astute, have made money out of it. And since then we have a modern art."

He shook his fist in the air : "Rogues everywhere ! "

Then he pulled me away.

The rooms were all topsy-turvy. Big cupboards stood in the centre, tables, chests, cabinets, choir-seats blocked the way, doors were taken down, we breathed dust into our lungs.

Barbieri suddenly stamped and uttered a cry of pain : "Do you know what this demon has done to me ? A wood figure, as sweet, I tell you, as if it had fallen down from Heaven itself. A signed Benedetto da Majona ! Half my fortune was sunk in it, and every nerve of mine. I fought for it like a hero, did not sleep a wink for fourteen nights, at least. With a hatchet, Professore, with a hatchet the demon chopped it up and used it for firewood. And the police and the medical officer came too late. Think what else he might have done in his frenzy ? Even now the damage ■ incalculable. You will say : there is the insurance ! Everybody tries to console me by telling me about the insurance. But insurance companies are serpents and glide out of it. Even ■ they pay up, can money replace a Benedetto da Majona ? I

want to warn you, my friend. This madness may be all feigned, a trick . . ."

Barbieri conducted me through the rooms.

I admired two bas-reliefs by Donatello, a South German Madonna, another Madonna and again a Madonna. We stood a long time in front of a sacristy cupboard, which Barbieri ascribed to Gaddi, and the silver female bust on his stick ecstatically traced the rhythmic folds of the robe of a saint. Barbieri broke into tearful enthusiasm at the sight of each piece and vowed that no dollar prince could entice it away from him. He swore that he sent away clients every day, though they begged him on their knees to part with his treasures for any sum he liked to name. How could he part with such beauty? He was happy when he found a piece that was impossible to sell, like this Cartapesta angel, for instance. (The female bust on the stick tapped a severe medieval head.) But the Director of the Boston Museum had already slunk round it to-day like a fox. And the Director of the Cincinnati Museum was coming to-morrow.

The daylight was already turning to gold. And still no sign of Saverio's work! But something indefinably depressing exuded from these ancient works of art. I exerted all my will-power—tired as I was—and repeated what I wanted to see.

Just at that minute Toni came in, without taking his hands out of his trouser pockets: "There's a woman downstairs."

Barbieri snarled like a dog on a chain: "What sort of a woman?"

"A woman, that's all."

Barbieri lifted up his stick. Toni kicked a pigskin volume that was lying on the ground out of the way: "She isn't young. She's an ugly woman."

Barbieri panted: "You rascal, I'm asking you what she wants!"

"What would she want? It's the first to-day. She's come for her money."

I thought there would be a row. But after a tense minute, Barbieri threw the boy another note: "Murderer, I'll kill you if you dare to disturb me again!"

And to me: "You see, that is his gratitude, Professore!"

The room that had previously been called the studio was absolutely empty. Piano, gramophones, everything had disappeared: the carpet was rolled up, the curtains had been taken down.

Barbieri took off his hat and he even put his everlasting stick down in a corner. He walked on tiptoe as if he were in church. And indeed, against the end wall of the room rose something hung with sacking, which looked like an altar. The old man spoke with a hushed voice : " Since it is you, Professore, I will show you something that few people have had the privilege to see."

He tore the drapery off from the structure, revealing a triptych with the side wings empty. But in the centre there shone, amid the streaming red gold sunset flow, an ancient panel. Barbieri's voice was almost choked with emotion : " Cimabue ! "

And then : " Authenticity absolutely established in the literature."

The old man was not play-acting. He was genuinely and profoundly moved by the sight of the picture. He held his head forward as if in religious contemplation and was silent ; only his quick, ecstatic breathing was audible.

The panel represented the Virgin and Child surrounded by saints. The gold-encircled heads of the adoring saints sank into obscurity. But the Queen of Heaven shone in unearthly colours. There was the rose of her tunic, a rose in which the blue of mystic autumn timelessness seemed dissolved. The speckled blue of the robe, too, seemed to have nothing like it among the colours of nature. The long, greenish, boneless fingers held the Child in the white billowing folds of the swathings with precious shyness. If anything in the world were beautiful to the point of tears, it was these heavenly colours on the sacred, immutable structure of the Ikon.

What follows I write with extreme reluctance. Feelings of this kind, the evidence for which lies outside reason, demand a credulity which I cannot demand from anyone. I suggest no solution, and draw no consequences. I state nothing more than what I felt. I recall that the first time I saw him, Saverio had put a strong influence on me ; so that I had during the year often seen him in dreams, which, with anyone I knew so little, had never happened to me before. Nor do I forget that when Mondhaus had told me that Saverio was mad, the news had quite shaken me, and for hours now I was tortured by the desire to see his works. On top of this there was the place (the same studio where I had seen Saverio), and the fact that I was tired out and had not eaten

since breakfast. All these things go to account for my hyper-sensitive state just then.

I cannot see more clearly than any other normal person. The capacity to have a presentiment now and again about something, important or unimportant, is one that most of us would feel if we paid more attention to the essential facts of our life. But we do not even understand the rude mechanism of the bodily excretions. How much less can we, wrapped up in the social scheme, perceive the finer border-line experiences that come to us every day.

But I am here describing one of these experiences :

For, out of the ancient panel by Cimabue, there came to me with almost corporeal power the personality of Saverio.

I have not the slightest ground for doubting the genuineness of this divine altar-piece. I was afterwards assured that there are ways of preparing a wood panel so that it conveys the impression of great age to the most distrustful investigator. The forgers used to cover the cunningly, acid-prepared panel, for instance, with a thick coating of wax and then discharge at it from a distance special shot, which reproduced masterfully the effect of the woodworm. That is what I have been told. I can't say whether it is true. I have heard of other miracles wrought by the genius of the restorer, bringing back as if by magic the vision of the ancient master to sooty unrecognisable wrecks. But so far as I can say, it was utterly inconceivable that there should have been a fake in this instance. Can one fake the soul of a picture ? But the stupefying fact was that Saverio's personality hit me like a blow. Saverio's personality ? It was like a skein of tangled contradictions : exaggerated handshake, polished manners, lies and confession that they were lies, love of splendour and a plank bed, actor-like declamation and the sudden sobbing when he showed that portrait of a man. And this desperate disunion of a unity was constantly taking up my mind, appeared to me in a dream, and now was senselessly obtruding itself in this Cimabue panel. Yet what had that shadowlike portrait of a man which I had sensed in the mirroring glass to do with the gracious transcendental colour of the early master ?

At first I thought it was something "occult." Then it came to me like a flash : Saverio faked this Ikon. But one minute later I rejected the idea completely. Now I content myself with the sceptical reasonings which follow :

Exhaustion and hunger ! 'The influence of the room ! Saverio's extraordinary effect on me ! My emotion at his fate. The unsatisfied desire to see his work, which emerged like magic from the Cimabue panel. Explain it as one may, my experience was so intense that I had to look away. When I looked there again, Barbieri had covered up the triptych.

My hands were ice-cold. Involuntarily I exclaimed :

" Where did you get that picture from ? "

Barbieri put his hand over my mouth, with a scared look, groaned and pulled me into a tiny room that was very barely furnished. Then he reproached me, that I had made him take such a liking to me that he was running his head into danger. He begged me to be only a scholar and never meddle with business, like those spies and cheats who made art dealing so full of risks and uncertainty. If he had a son, he would have made him a scholar as well. I had to take my oath a hundred times, that I would never divulge a word. Even the biggest museums in the world and the most famous collectors, Mitchinson and Havemeyer, only knew a false version.

We sat facing each other.

The silver female bust swayed before my eyes. Barbieri told me :

Near S. there is on one of the hills an ancient abbey belonging to the Benedictines. The little monastery is still well preserved. But in 1824 there was an earthquake, or a landslide, in which the Romanesque church belonging to the abbey, and standing a little apart from it, was destroyed. The ruins were, for some reason unknown, left there. The monks resist any attempt to pull them down, and it is a constant cause of dissension between the secular authorities and the clergy. As a precaution the site is surrounded by a high fence, fortified with barbed wire. No one is allowed inside, and the Abbot is the only one who has a key. Barbieri went on to describe with enthusiasm how, being once in S., he had prowled like a wild beast round the enclosed ruin, sensing the truth somehow, though he had nothing whatever to go upon, and how he had arranged to get to know the mistrustful Abbot at wine, without arousing his suspicion. He told me of the days spent in playing catch as catch can with the monk, how he had hunted through the whole district to discover something that would give him a hold over the monastery, and how at last he caught the slippery fish of an Abbot in his merciless hands.

His voice trembled, as he described his entrance into the ruins, and how he turned faint when he saw what a vast treasure house it was. The greatest men in Italian art, all the old masters, had come here, to this tumble-down house of God, to decorate high altars and side altars, nave, choir, walls, pulpit, and sacristy, even the crypt and lower cellars.

The antique-dealer paused at this point to assure himself, with a penetrating glance, that he had my confidence. He touched me with his knees : " I am putting myself in your hands, Professore. I am revealing to you my secret. I trust you will not betray me. One day I may be able to take you along with me. That would be a tremendous experience for you. But one must be careful with these monks. It will take more than a hundred years to complete the inventory. I have a secret agreement with the Vatican. Woe to me if the dollarites get to know about it. Next year is anno santo. The priests want to sell, for the Church needs money. Do you follow ? If the dollarites get on the track of it, I shall be ruined. And the Church has the power to join and put aside ! Why should she not put aside my agreement ? Trouble, Professore, trouble . . . "

He went back to the abbey : " Imagine it, my friend, a windy, moonlight night, like on a film. The prior and I carrying lanterns. Behind us five monks in their white habits. Sentinels were set. And we brought up the relics out of the sacred mine, heavenly relics ! Just imagine it ! "

I imagined it very vividly, I seemed to hear the quick, thudding music that accompanies a meeting of conspirators.

Barbieri banged his stick on the floor : " So, now you know, where the Cimabue comes from. I enrich the world, Professore, not myself. Seventy-five per cent. goes to the Benedictines. The Church knows how to get the best out of a business deal. And who runs all the risk ? "

" But the world hates me ! " he shouted. " Take Dubosc ! Dubosc has no soul for art, no eyes, but he has got three hundred million dollars. The people in the museums and the art experts have to dance to his piping. He issues his orders : ' Time we compromised old Barbieri. Barbieri is getting too big for his boots. What shall we do, Smithers ? And Dr. Smithers, of Glasgow, the slave, makes obeisance : As your Dollar Highness commands ! And within four weeks Smithers of Glasgow has a

new work out, in which the fawning dollar hound claims that the letter M of the inscription on the pedestal of this or the other Madonna is a letter M that did not yet exist in the year 1322, and came into fashion not till 1347. That is erudition! The experts and the collectors collapse. And Dubosc presents Smithers with his photograph in a diamond-studded frame. And I, Professore, and I who have eyes and have a soul . . ."

The antique-dealer rose to smite his enemy: "They are not going to play with me. In the new Italy one can put a stop to their intrigues. Do you know what these art spies and fools all are?"

"I know what they are," he hissed.

Violet spots of triumph began to show on his cheeks: "And do you know what is taking place in our town nowadays?"

He whispered shamefacedly: "A congress of homo-sexuals, Professore! A congress of these people. Perverse beastliness in our new, manly Italy."

The congress seemed to have come at a very opportune moment for Barbieri: "Ought Fascist Italy to tolerate such obscenities? Ought people like Smithers to run around here? No, no, no, Professore! Out with them!"

And he concluded quietly: "I have written a long letter to the Duce calling his attention to the congress!"

"Do you know that Benito Mussolini reads every letter from an Italian?"

I admitted that it was an admirable performance.

Now he thundered out his credo: "The Duce considers it his supreme task to protect Italian business against foreign competition."

Toni pushed his way in through the door and announced: "The two people have come, and your meal has come as well, sir!"

The antique-dealer moaned: "The people are here, always these people. . . Whom have I to thank for that but your Saverio, Professore? . . ."

We went down the stairs. Suddenly he held me tight: "Seven women sitting at home, seven women to be kept, and the youngest is seventeen. If one needs a new fur, I must buy new furs for the lot, that makes seven furs. And they must be expensive furs, because I am Barbieri. Consider my life! What have I got

in return, what comfort, what service? A rascal brings my food in a basket, as if I were a bricklayer. Tell that to the world, Professore! Nobody will believe it. . . ."

And in a grief-stricken voice: "I should have had a son! Dubosc has three sons, and they are all in the business!"

He was again assailed by bitterness, and began to describe to me fully Saverio's attack of frenzy which had been the beginning of his madness, and to bemoan the fate of his Benedetto da Majano. The hand with which he held on to my coat, trembled: "He is deceiving you, Professore, and me! Remember my words! This madness is blackmail. . . . And who is going to be blackguarded in the end? I, always I!"

I don't know why I didn't leave then, but allowed Barbieri to pull me into another room. It was probably a last hope to see what I had come to see. But had I not already seen more than enough?

It was night now.

The people whose arrival Toni had announced were in the room, in which part of the table was covered by a dirty napkin. I recognised the Contessa Fagarazzi and a strange man, whom Barbieri introduced as *Avvocato Sanudo*, presenting me with a German name and a resounding title, of which I had never dreamed.

Sanudo was a crafty man with damp lips and an indolent, roguish head. He smiled languorously, but it was a kind of determined langour, which never left his features.

The Contessa Fagarazzi threw back her veil and sat down stiffly at one end of the table. Her painted eyebrows in the immovable enamel of her face looked like a Japanese etching. I was afraid that her lips might suddenly start St. Vitus' dancing again, and the little violet mouth would be contorted into a twisting and twitching mass. It did not happen. Her mouth and soul had perhaps found peace now that Saverio was lost. Perhaps her grief for him gave her strength and fortitude. For, in spite of her artificiality, she seemed to me much younger now. There was the glint of battle in her eyes. And the unmistakable charm of experience.

Barbieri tried to make himself pleasant to Sanudo: "I have put some things aside for your studio, *Avvocato*! You will thank me for it!"

The Contessa Fagarazzi's attitude and the way Barbieri was trying to ingratiate himself with the lawyer led one to conclude that he was in a disadvantageous position with regard to his visitors. They seemed to have legal claims and powers which endangered his position. No doubt they concerned Saverio. Had not Barbieri raged against him as a demon? It was not improbable that the Countess was married to this demon, and now, as stiff as her artificial face, she represented the demands of her powerless husband.

Barbieri dropped into a chair with a groan and threw down his stick on the table beside him: "Do you know that I had a bad accident yesterday? A broken axle between Stra and Padua. The car is absolutely unfit for use! We had to return by train!"

Then I heard the woman's voice for the first time, a voice no less girlish than her figure: "I had considered such a possibility. And I have arranged to have a car ready for us on Monday."

Barbieri seemed vastly amused: "You are a remarkable woman, Contessa! But I have forestalled you. The new car, which I ordered by telegram from Turin, arrives to-day in Mestre!"

Then, turning to me: "You know, Professore, the doctors tell me that a long journey by motor-car in my present condition may have very serious consequences. And yet, on Monday, I shall travel for many, many hours in an automobile. The society of the Contessa will protect me. No, Professore, I never hold back from my duty. At sixty I volunteered for the front. It was not my fault that they rejected me. . . ."

They were all sitting down. I alone stood, though Barbieri asked me to take a seat. The Advocate kept looking at me with surprise, in his languorous wise way. I was obviously an intruder. But Barbieri, who had mistaken me for goodness knows whom, seemed glad to have me there. He had a lot to say about his seven women, his lonely life, Dubosc and ignoble competition in general. Then he complained that he no longer had the same energy, and yet he had to be attending meetings all day long. In the old days he might sometimes have been a formidable antagonist, but now he was so indifferent, so settled down, that it amused him to defend the interests of a rival to whom he had taken a liking, against his own interests. As he said this, he bowed smilingly to the Countess.

He asked us to forgive him for having his meal in our presence, but he was an old man.

While he was helping himself out of the basket, he put forward the contention that, in order to live long, people should eat slowly. And he ate his "pasta" exceedingly slowly, though he looked a man who usually bolts his food.

I saw through it immediately. It was like everything else about him, his talk, his frankness, nothing more than a manoeuvre to wear down the enemy. That was what he had done, too, with me who had come to see Saverio's pictures. Why?

I was witnessing a terrible combat; I saw it in Fagarazzi's gleaming eyes, that became more tense and filled with the lust of battle. I not only witnessed it, but without wanting to, joined in it, for Barbieri used my disturbing presence as an ally. I thought I detected that there was much more than money at stake.

Sanudo drew out devoutly a roll of papers and placed in front of him a few sheets of notary paper, on which agreements and legal documents are drawn up in Italy. He cleared his throat and tried several times to terminate the scene with an admonishing "dunque."

But Barbieri only proceeded to explain that Fletcher's system with its thirty-two masticating movements did not go far enough, and that one must chew each bite forty-five times before it was capable of being properly digested. It would be a good thing, too, to take a sip of wine each time.

Countess Fagarazzi's soft, girlish voice broke in: "You are quite right, Commendatore! Your health is more important to us than it is even to yourself. Don't disturb yourself on our account. We've got plenty of time."

Never in my life had I realised so much the inscrutability of people. But I did not feel that it was a gift of life, but something wicked, godless, an obstacle to all love, the devilish source of all despair. Three people sat here, total strangers to me, who did not concern me at all, and yet my jangled nerves pleaded for a truth that I could not demand, and which was probably inexplicable. Was it known to the lawyer Sanudo, whose languid superiority seemed to make a display of it? No! He had certainly not been told more than was necessary for his legal assistance and the stamped official documents. And the two combatants, Barbieri and Fagarazzi? It was clear that neither of them knew

the other's cards yet. What was the meaning of this motor journey? Was Saverio to be taken to a private asylum? Was Barbieri afraid of that? Was the madness real, simulated or even prearranged? And why? Inscrutability! And if I knew *all* the facts, would I not find fresh inscrutabilities beneath? The most terrible thing about it was that I myself was playing an inscrutable part at this fateful meeting. Sanudo's indolent and wicked smile was trying to make out what my part was. And that was not all! I was inscrutable to myself. A morbid idea took possession of me, that it was not my own will that had brought me here. I was overcome with excruciating fear for this unknown Saverio, and I felt a powerful command from the soul: *help him!*

It flashed through my head that often doctors and judges took bribes and sent sane people into asylums, to get rid of an important witness who might have laid bare an act of injustice. Might not both Barbieri and the Countess be capable of some such act?

I was overcome by a condition that can be termed neither sadness, nor melancholy, still less physical discomfort. There is a spiritual illness, worse than anything else. One feels one would like to lie down, on the spot, in the open street, without hope, able to die.

Nevertheless, in spite of the resistance put up by Barbieri, I managed to get up and grin a farewell and mumble polite thanks.

## V

During the night—I lay sleepless till the morning—I decided to visit Saverio in San Clemente. Perhaps his spirit was not destroyed but only unhinged; perhaps he would reveal himself to me now.

But when the morning came, I was dead tired, it was raining, and I could not find enough strength to carry out my decision.

The next day was so beautiful that I yielded to the inner voice that warned me against darkening this splendour by a visit to a lunatic asylum.

The third morning I was assailed by numerous doubts. I had no right to wrest from a sick man the answer to the riddle that he had so anxiously withheld when he was well. My visit might also be harmful to him. Perhaps his madness was only a weapon in the fierce warfare between Saverio, the Contessa and a powerful

exploiter. Would not the intrusion of a stranger work mischief? And how could I, knowing nothing and having no part in the affair, help?

But on Sunday I knew that I was afraid and only looking for excuses not to go to San Clemente.

Then fate stepped in and something happened to me which claimed all my attention for several days. When I was free again, the Saverio affair had strangely paled. I found a number of explanations all at once, and the word "secret" roused in me a rationalist hatred. And my visit to Barbieri inspired in me a feeling of extreme discomfort.

I have never seen Saverio again. I do not know if he died in the asylum or if he is still alive. Mondhaus, whom I met only once since, and that at a big social gathering, before I finally left Italy, was passionately interested in another affair, and had chosen some young man as the new victim to his squinting intrusiveness. This young man seemed to have absorbed his entire detective zeal in the matter of Saverio. We did not speak three words to each other. But I felt a kind of morbid pleasure in refraining from asking any questions about the painter.

Life crushes and crumbles everything and lets it fall slowly from its hand. Life? We ourselves! Oh, how indifferent we become, how incapable of understanding the things that once held us passionately!

If I were to read an advertisement in the street to-day: "Exhibition of the posthumous works of the painter, Saverio" would I go there?

I don't know.

On the table, in front of me, as I write this, lies a newspaper. The feuilleton is an "Italian Letter" by Stefan Mondhaus. It deals briefly with the new corporation laws of the peninsula, describes a festival production in Verona, and closes with a hymn of praise to the newly-discovered Cimabue, which, after an adventurous Odyssey, has at last come to rest in the patriotic harbour of a native collector:

"Speak not of 'style,' 'decoration,' 'rhythm.' Do not take refuge in well worn phrases, but fall to your knees before the overwhelming piety and uniqueness of a century that we are not worthy to understand."

I am not thinking, however, of the heavenly Cimabue panel.

I am looking at a dark, colourless portrait of a man, and I do not know whether I once *really* saw it. Yet I could describe it in the closest technical detail.

The contours of the head—I see them flowingly encircling that suffering countenance—were made luminous by a yellowish, bonelike white.

## MOROCCAN WEDDING

By ERNST TOLLER

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICK*

Ernst Toller, born 1893, in the province of Bromberg, East Prussia. Fought in the Great War, and became an ardent pacifist and revolutionary. When he was invalided out of the army, wounded, he joined the revolutionary movement, and after the revolution became chairman of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council in Munich. Was sentenced to five years' imprisonment when the Bavarian Soviet Republic was overthrown. His volume of poems, the "Swallow-Book," was written in prison. Some of his plays are world-famous: "Masses and the Man," "The Machine-Wreckers," "Hinkemann," "Hopla, We Live," "Fire from the Boilers." Most of them have been produced in London.

Toller's work has been tremendously praised. No less a man than Gerhart Hauptmann, author of "The Weavers," and a Nobel Prizeman for literature, has described him as "an immense figure in modern drama." "Toller's 'Masses and the Man,' stirred me," he has said, "as few modern plays succeed in doing. Here was a powerful interpretation of modern problems! Toller has given utterance once and for all to the masses and their problems." The following story is Toller's own selection for this volume.

HAMID BEN HADJ had reached the age when a man is tired of being alone; and buys a wife. So the sixteen-year-old went to his mother, to ask her to look round among the beauties of Tetuan, and find one to be his wife. Her eyes should be blacker than the shadows at midnight, her skin should smell of amber and roses, her body be firm, with soft curves.

The mother took counsel with her sister, the sister with her husband, the husband with his father, who knew a shoemaker, Mohammed Ben Salim, in Sakia el Fokin, a diligent workman. He read the Koran like a Marabu. He prayed every morning in the Mosque. No one had ever seen him drunk. His eleven-year-old daughter Fatima would be just the wife for Hamid.

The next day Hamid's mother visited Fatima's mother. They drank tea and ate sweet cake. They repeated the latest gossip.

They admired the new pendulum clock. There were already six hanging on the walls, and all of them were wrong. But the possession of a large number of wall clocks is in Morocco evidence of good taste and appreciation of the decencies. Meanwhile, Hamid's mother eyed young Fatima, who was sitting quietly on a pillow. There is no fault in her. Her eyes are blacker than the shadows at midnight. Her skin smells of amber and roses. She is firm with soft curves. The houries in Paradise cannot be more beautiful. A few days later Hamid's father asked the shoemaker how much he was asking for his daughter. He wanted two hundred and twenty Duros, but after a little argument he agreed to take two hundred, and the deed of betrothal was drawn up. It specified in addition to the purchase price all the clothes all the shirts, all the shoes, all the ornaments that Fatima would bring into the marriage, for if the hour should come when Hamid tired of Fatima, and he should send her away, he must return all her possessions to her. Only if—Allah forbid—it would be discovered to the disgrace of the parents, that the eleven-year-old was no longer a virgin, would he be able to turn her out of the house, and he would in addition be paid a penalty, the amount of which is carefully stipulated in the contract.

Both fathers went to the Khadi, who confirmed the contract, an ox was slaughtered for the betrothal feast, and Hamid presented his bride, her mother, and all her sisters with shirts and cloths of white wool, and her father, her brother, and all male relatives with beautiful yellow slippers.

I was invited to the wedding. All the friends of the house came. We sat on carpets, in the room which Hamid's parents had arranged for the young couple. The bridal bed was heaped high with cushions. The musicians fiddled away at their one-stringed violins and drummed upon wooden gongs, and sang verses from the Koran and old Arab love-songs.

We drank tea and munched sweets.

The bridegroom, a boy, who hadn't yet a suspicion of down on his cheek, went from guest to guest, and asked him if he would be happy to-night. He must be happy. He had borrowed a lot of Duros in order to have a feast like the Caliph himself.

The Moroccan sky darkened blue-black over the open, inner courtyard. The southern stars shone big and solemn in the warm November night. On the roof, crouching one on top of

the other, sat the women. They were like rare white birds, chattering and laughing softly, with guttural sounds, and the glowing black almond eyes gleamed phosphorescently through the slit in the thick white veils that covered their faces.

Down in the courtyard the men of the Aissana sect collected and started to dance.

"Allah il Allah!" they kept chanting incessantly. Their feet moved swiftly along the ground. Their bodies swung from the knees upward, forward, to the left, to the right. They formed figure eights. The dance grew more rapid, fiercer. The women servants, who crowded behind the kitchen door, accompanied the rhythmically moaning, groaning men, with ecstatic, chirp-like whistling. One of the men leapt out of the chorus, jumped into the centre, and whirled round furiously till he collapsed. The dance awed me. Their legs never relaxed, each movement intensified the spasm. The individuals vanished. They lost themselves in a kind of trance, became just one frenzied mass, which—this is the strange, indeed, the menacing part of it—obeyed as if by magic transmission the priest who, by gently clapping his hands, directed their mathematical figures. If this human whirlwind should turn against an enemy, it would with the blind force of a natural element sweep away everything in its path.

Suddenly at a sign from the priest the dance ended, and the men awoke, and sat down dumb and exhausted, to the wedding feast.

Servants brought in whole sheep, roasted on a spit, rice and kuskus, confectionery and cakes; they filled the cups with tea that was brewed of fresh mint leaves.

His young friends made a ring round the bridegroom. "Hamid Ben Hadj is our Sultan," they cried, "and we are his Ministers."

Hamid smiled, embarrassed.

At this point, a watchman announced that the musicians had arrived to fetch the bride. All the guests rose, four men lifted on to their shoulders the rug-covered bridal chest, in which there sat a tiny lad, huge candles, a yard in height and as thick as your fist, were lighted, and the men carried them like torches, and in front of them went the musicians, trumpeting and fluting, and the procession wended its way through the quiet, nocturnal streets of Tetuan, over which a thousand arches had been stretched, to the house of the bride.

Only the bridegroom stayed behind. He was in the house of a neighbour, being garbed in white silk robes.

Meanwhile the bride in the home of her parents has prepared for the nuptial night. Only women guests are there. No strange man may enter the house. She is bathed in scented water, all body-hair is removed, feet and hands are stained with henna, and she ■ wrapped in costly raiment.

The loud monotonous music of our procession announces the hour of parting. The door of the bridal house is opened, bride, parents and guests withdraw into the rooms ; the courtyard is left deserted.

Our procession comes to a halt outside the house. The music stops. The bearers go in, set down the chest, which the lad has left, in the middle of the courtyard, and go out.

The doors of the rooms are thrown open now. The bride takes leave of her father and mother. She is placed inside the low, narrow chest, and as she crouches there they press into her hands a loaf of bread, into which a Duro has been baked. The women hasten back into their rooms, the father goes to the gate, opens it, and as he cries "Dochlo !" the bearers come in, lift the chest again on to their shoulders, the band begins again to play, the procession forms up and winds back to the bridegroom's house. The chest, with the bride inside, is set down in the courtyard. Everybody has left the house, except the priest and two friends, who bend their candles into an arch of light, behind which steps the bridegroom. The priest blesses him, he goes into his room and prays to Allah. The priest and the friends leave the courtyard, and lock the gate behind them. Now, the old serving-woman, the only woman who has come with the wedding procession, goes up to the bridal chest, lifts the rug, and carries the bride pick-a-back into the room of the bridegroom. She is rewarded with the loaf of bread, and then she, too, goes out.

The bride sits on a cushion with her eyes shut. Twice the bridegroom prays, his face towards Mecca. Then he lifts the veil from her face, and for the first time sees his bride. But she must not open her eyes. Not until the bridegroom has pushed the third piece of bread into her mouth, and then she opens her eyes, and for the first time sees her husband.

The first embrace ■ brief. The poor thing hardly knows how

it happens. Then the husband rises and proceeds to the bath house, to carry out the ablutions prescribed by the Koran.

He has hardly left when his mother rushes into the bridal chamber with her women neighbours, and with a great deal of shouting they examine the girl to see whether she was a virgin. They hand the sheet to one of the serving women, who carries it to the parents of the bride, to give them greetings that they have brought up a good daughter.

After the bath the husband returns to his wife. For three days they remain in their room. The husband's mother waits on them, and brings them food. In the morning the musicians come into the courtyard, and play in honour of the bridal pair.

As we walked back to our hotel in the pale light of the dawn, from the Mosque, Sidi Abdullah el Hach, the Muezzin, was calling the faithful to prayer.

"Allah is Allah, and there is no God but Allah!"

"At the last wedding to which I was invited," said my Moroccan friend to me, "the women thought the bride was not a virgin. She was hunted out with abuse and denunciations. Her parents would not take her back into their home—her father would have killed her—so the girl, weeping and shrieking, and protesting her innocence, had to go into that street there, into a house of bad women. . . ."

I stumbled over a beggar who was sleeping under an archway, and when he woke and started whining, and stretched out his hands, I saw that he was blind.

"That is Sidi Ben Briz," said my guide. "He had his eyes put out many years ago by order of the Khadi, because he had lifted them to the wife of a Pasha."

I stopped and looked at the beggar, and caught my breath. On my way that evening to the bridal house, I had passed houses in which wireless sets were playing. The jazz band of the Paris Ritz penetrated into this impenetrable world.

We went on. In a side street, white and brown proletarians were working hard by the light of acetylene lamps, sweating, digging up the road and laying down drain-pipes. My guide stood and pondered, without looking over there.

"I'll tell you another story," he said. "It happened at Arcila. A woman refused to live with her husband any longer. He was rich, but he beat her. And he did not believe in God.

So she went to the Pasha, and he dissolved the marriage. The husband repented what he had done, and wanted to take the woman back into his house. But according to the Koran that could not be done, unless she had first lain with another man. So the husband asked a stranger of the village of Telata to conclude a marriage contract for one night with his wife, and he gave him fifty Duros that he should not touch her during the nuptial night. But the woman remained with the stranger. At night, when they saw each other face to face, the man fell in love with the woman, and the woman fell in love with the man, and the man forgot his promise. In the morning he went to Arcila, to her first husband, and put down the fifty Duros on the table.

" ' Here is your money,' he said. ' I have broken my promise. But I know that Allah will forgive me.' "

" And he turned away and went home to the woman he loved."

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## A STORY

*From the Autobiography of Glückel of Hameln*

Translated by BETH ZION LASK

Glückel von Hameln, born 1646 in Hamburg, died 1724. Her memoirs started in 1690, "have been recognised not only as a primary source for the condition of the Jews in the seventeenth century but also as one of the most delightful works in the whole range of Jewish literature."

"It is no exaggeration," Dr. Cecil Roth writes, "to call Glückel a German-Jewish Pepys. She has all of Pepys' garrulity, frankness, unbounded zest in life and genius for portraiture. Only their spheres were different. He was interested in *amours*, politics and courts; she in matchmaking, children and business. The memoirs of Glückel von Hameln are invaluable in any attempt to reconstruct the Jewish life of that stormy, picturesque period on the threshold of modern times."

Glückel was an ancestress of Heinrich Heine and of Meyerbeer, the composer.

The work which is in seven volumes, was written in Judeo-German. Two translations into German have appeared, in 1910 and 1923. An English translation from the German by Marvin Lowenthal was published by Harper and Brothers in 1932. Miss Lask's translation, parts of which have been published in periodicals, was made several years ago from the original Yiddish.

THIS is quite a pleasant story that should comfort the bereaved and sorrowful heart. A man should never despair of God's help, even as the pious man of whom I shall tell, for though poverty and sorrow befell him, he suffered patiently without wavering in his faith. And God, on His part, stood graciously by him and helped him, as you will read.

There was once a pious man. He had a pious wife and two sons. He also had a little money on which he lived, so that he did no business but devoted the whole of his time to study. Nevertheless, he wished to earn a little by the work of his hands so that his family should be secured against reliance on strangers. But fortune was not with him and he, poor man, fell into debt and could not pay. None would even be surety for him, with the result

that his creditors brought him before the judge, and the judge decided that he must go to prison. And so it happened.

His wife wept bitterly for she did not know how she would support herself and her two little ones, particularly as she now had to provide her husband with food while in prison. And while she lamented and wept, an old man came to her and asked her why she cried so bitterly. Seeing what a respectable, fine-looking old man he was, she told him all her troubles. And the old man said, "Cease weeping; God will help you. Because your husband studies Torah He will not desert you, for He does not desert a Talmud Chocham; if He does not help him in his youth, He helps him in old age. Even more, I know that you will suffer much and, together with your husband, pass through much storm and stress, yet if you are patient, God will reward it all with good." Thus he comforted her and advised her to become a washerwoman; people would pay her for washing their shirts. "In this way," he concluded, "you will support your husband and children—if you are not shamefaced and approach all and sundry for work."

So counselled by the old man, she was quieted and thanked him warmly, promising to obey his every word. Then the old man departed and she saw him no more.

She went home, prepared some food for her husband and cheered him, telling him not to be impatient, but to continue his pious studies even in this dire condition, while she would work day and night to support the family. And in that dark cell the pious prisoner and his wife wept bitterly, imploring the mercy of Heaven on their little ones.

The woman was the first to recover. She dried her eyes and said, "My dear husband, our cries and wails will not give us and our children bread. I will go and see what work God sends me, that I may support you and the children." So saying she went home to sleep a trustful sleep with full faith in the morrow.

The following morning, while the children yet slept she arose and went into the town, from house to house, to ask for washing.

The town was situated on the edge of the sea. Every day she went with her children to the sea and washed clothes, spreading them out on the sands to dry.

It happened once that as she was washing, a ship sailed by and the captain, approaching close to the land, saw the woman and

marvelled at her beauty. And when the woman enquired the cause of his staring, he answered, "My dear woman, I pity you. Tell me, how much do you get for washing a shirt?" "For a man's shirt," she replied, "I get two groschen, but I must wash it quite clean." Then he said, "I would gladly give you four groschen if you washed my shirt clean." "I will wash it willingly," she returned.

She took the shirt, washed it clean and spread it to dry on the grass, while the captain waited on the boat for her to finish.

He watched her washing and drying the shirt and her neat folding. The boat was a little distance from the shore, as the captain could not get it close enough to the land, so he threw her the money, wrapped in paper, and saying, "Reach me my shirt into the boat." But he caught her hand and pulled her into the boat and rowed off quickly. She cried aloud from the land, but to no purpose. Soon she was out at sea and her cries were no longer heard.

When the children saw and heard their mother no more they ran to their father, who was still in prison, and told him what had occurred, and the poor man lifted up his voice and cried aloud, "God, my God! Why have You forsaken me in such loneliness? I have now no one to see to me while I am in prison." Weeping he fell asleep and dreamed that he was in a great wilderness and wild beasts surrounded him. They stood over him eager to devour him. He trembled and looked about him at the desolation. Then he saw a shepherd and flock approach. When the wild beasts saw the herd they left him and followed the cattle. He ran away and reached a castle which stood on a river full of boats. He entered the castle, where he was enthroned and rejoiced greatly together with his shipmates. Then he awoke and remembered the dream and said to himself, "Surely the dream shews that my troubles will pass away, and God will help me by the aid of sailors, because through them I have been abused."

About this time the king of the town died and his son succeeded him. The young king remitted the taxes of the land for three years in order to earn himself a good name. He also freed the prisoners. And so it came to pass that our pious man, too, was freed.

Once out of prison there was again the need of earning a living. He and his two sons went to and fro in the market to procure

whatever work they could to buy bread. Suddenly he raised his eyes towards the port and saw a ship about to leave for the East Indies, so he said to his sons, "Come now. Your mother was taken away in a ship, so we shall go away in a ship. Perhaps we shall find her, and God will bring us together again."

Straightaway he went to the captain and told him all that had happened to him, and asked him to take him and his children on board, for he was poor and had no money for bread. The captain had pity on him and took him and his children on board and gave them food and drink and a place to lay their heads.

When they were in mid-ocean, God let loose a great storm-wind and the ship was smashed to atoms. The sailors, the cargo and everything on board were lost—all except the Talmud Chocham, his sons, and the captain who had sustained them. They each had seized hold of a spar: our pious friend and the captain on separate fragments, and the two children together on a single piece of wreckage. The sea carried them away to different lands.

The Talmud Chocham was thrown out on a great wilderness in a place where savages lived. Here the king's daughter, who had charge of the sheep and cattle, saw him. She was naked and very hairy and wore fig-leaves to cover her shame. Perceiving him, she approached him and made it clear that she loved him and would be his wife. Out of great fear he pretended love, and showed by signs that he would take her.

The other savages saw this and they whistled and all the savages came leaping from their caves in the hills where they lived. They ran up to him, eager to drink his blood and eat his flesh. Even the king was there. The Talmud Chocham was so scared that he could scarce breathe. When the king's daughter saw his terror she showed him that there was no cause for fear, and she arose and went to the king her father and begged him that he should let the man live, as she wanted him as her husband. He assented and the pious man was once again preserved. And so the Talmud Chocham lay with her that night and she was his wife and he was her husband. Nevertheless when he thought of his own beautiful wife and her miserable plight, and that nothing could be altered, he bore everything with fortitude, for he protested that God would help him to reach his dear wife and children.

Very soon the princess was big with child, and in time she bore him a savage child, a boy.

For two full years he lived with them and tended the cattle in the wilderness, eating the flesh of the wild ass and dwelling in a cave in the hillside with his wife. They were now both overgrown with hair and he looked as savage as she.

One day he stood on a small hill not far from the sea, thinking of all that had happened to him ; the loss of his wife and children and—heaviest burden of all—how he now had to live among uncivilised people. Who knew but that when his savage wife had tired of him her tribe would devour his flesh and crush his bones for marrow, and he would not be laid to rest among Jews. "Is it not better," he mused, "that I should run from this hill into the sea and drown myself, as my children were drowned?" (He did not know that the sea had cast them upon dry land.) Then he would meet them in the future world. He confessed his sins before God, with hot bitter tears. When he had made an end of confessing, he began to run towards the sea, to destroy himself. But a voice called to him by name, and said, "O doubting one! Why should you mistrust and thus destroy your soul? Go back to the hill on which you stood and dig and you will find a chest of gold and precious stones—a great and wonderful fortune. You will drag the box to the sea and remain standing there a while. Then a ship full of civilised people, bound for Antioch, will sail by. Shout to them to take you with them, to save you and the chest in their ship. In the end you will become a king, things will go well and you will see the end of your sufferings and the beginning of your happiness."

When he heard this he returned to the hill, and digging where the voice had bid him, he found the chest of gold and precious stones. Quickly he dragged it to the edge of the sea and lifting up his eyes saw a ship sailing near. He cried to them in a loud voice, and implored them to come close and take him aboard, as he was a civilised person like themselves despite his hairy unclothed body. They heard him and they drew near to the shore, where he told them all that had happened, and they took him and his chest quickly on board ship.

Just as he was about to step on board, his savage wife who had heard his shouts, came running up, their child on her arm. Seeing him in the ship, she called to him to take her with him. But he mocked at her, shouting, "What have I to do with wild animals? I have a better wife than you," and more than this.

When she heard that he would return to her no more, anger arose in her. She took the savage child by his feet and tearing him in two, threw one half into the ship and began to gnaw away in her rage at the other half with her teeth. The Talmud Chocham sailed away.

After some time he came to an islet in the sea where he landed. He opened his chest and lo! it was filled to the top with gold and priceless precious stones. He paid the captain his passage with pleasure, and had his chest carried to an inn. As he lay on his straw bed that night, he said to himself, "If I could buy this island from the king, I would build a castle and a town. I would then have a regular income and not be afraid that my money might be stolen."

Early next morning he went to the king, bought the island and several miles of seaboard and built a castle and town. In time the land became settled and prosperous. The people elected him their duke, and he reigned over all. Still he often thought of his wife and children and their tragic loss. At length he thought that as his wife had been stolen by a sailor, and all ships had to pass his seaboard, every ship should register with him before passing, on pain of complete confiscation. This was proclaimed and confirmed as a regular law.

All ships registered with him partook of his hospitality. Time passed and still he had heard nothing of his family. One Pesach, as the Talmud Chocham sat at table, in happy mood, his page announced the arrival of a well-known and wealthy shipowner who begged that he be not kept waiting long. The Talmud Chocham said, "To-day is a holy day and I may not ask him the nature of his cargo. He must wait till the holy day is over. Meanwhile let him come and pass the time with me."

When he arrived, he received him and left him sitting. But the captain asked not to be detained and his ship allowed to proceed. But ■ no purpose. He was constrained to remain and eat. The Talmud Chocham asked whence he came and whether he had a wife and children.

The captain told him the country of his origin and said he had two wives—one at home with whom he had had three children. "Her I keep as a housewife. The other is delicate and no good at house work, but she ■ highly cultured and delicately nurtured. I have her always with me so that she can superintend the affairs of the ship. She collects the money from the passengers and enters

it in a book. She manages everything. And all the time, I have never known her."

Hereupon the Talmud Chocham said, "Tell me, my dear captain, tell me though, why have you never lain with her?" To this the captain replied, "The woman once had a husband who was a very clever man. She learnt a riddle from him. And she declares that whosoever solves this riddle shall be her husband—'for he shall be my late husband's equal in cleverness, and him will I wed!' For she would rather kill herself than allow any other man to come near her. For she says: 'It is not meet for a clown to ride on a king's horse.'"

Then said the Talmud Chocham, "Dear captain, tell me the riddle."

The captain answered, "The woman tells how a bird without wings flies from heaven to earth and settles on a little tree.

"From side to side it shakes the tree  
Though we the bird no longer see.  
It gladdens the tree with beautiful flowers,  
And draws to its branches wonderful powers.  
Till sudden the tree is sore and bare,  
And the bird flies crying up in the air.  
O tree! who robbed the strength from thee?  
'Twas I. Thy strength came all from me."

"That, my king, is her riddle and it is impossible for me to solve it."

When the Talmud Chocham heard the riddle he was very agitated, for he knew that it was indeed his riddle and that the woman was his wife. The captain seeing his agitation said to him, "Sir, why are you so upset?" He answered, "I am overcome because of the rare and clever riddle. I would like to hear it from the woman herself. Perhaps you have forgotten or added to it. I wish to hear her tell it, and maybe I shall find the answer."

The Talmud Chocham sent his messenger for her. The fellow ran quickly and said to her, "Get ready. You must come with me to the duke, to eat and drink."

The heart of the good woman beat furiously when she heard this, for she could not fathom why she should be wanted, and feared that she might fall from a lesser misfortune into a greater one. But what could the poor woman do, but go where she was

led. So she dressed herself and adorned herself with jewels as one about to enter the presence of a king.

When she came into the castle and the king was informed of her he said, "Let her be admitted," She was brought in and a chair was placed for her beside the captain.

The Talmud Chocham received her. They did not ■ first recognise each other, for both faces and modes of dress had changed out of all recognition. All ate and drank and were jolly, but the Talmud Chocham sat as one lost in deep thought. The captain asked, "Sir, why are you not happy? Why are you lost in heavy thought? Are you sorry that we eat and drink too much? We can stop, thank you nicely, and go our way."

But he answered, "No. You are my very welcome guests. I am worried only about the riddle, for I should like to hear it from the woman herself." Then the captain asked her to tell the riddle to the duke, and she told it him, in the words I have already given. And the duke wondered greatly and said, "Woman, from whom did you get this riddle?"

"Sir," she answered, "I had a devout husband, a great Jewish rabbi. He often told me stories and riddles. It is his riddle and no one knows the answer to it."

"If someone gives you the right answer," he asked, "will you acknowledge it truthfully?" And she replied, "Sir, there ■ no one who can give the right answer but my husband."

"Then I am the one who can solve the riddle!" the Talmud Chocham answered. "The bird that flies from heaven to earth is the soul which settles as on a tree, for the body of a person is likened to a tree that grows fresh, green and full of branches in its youth—youth which is likened to a pleasure-ground. The bird sways and shakes the tree—that is the soul—which regulates the limbs; but no one sees the bird, for the soul ■ hidden away in the body. So the tree draws to itself all strength till it dries up and withers—such is the man who not content with his own, yet wishes to draw everything he sees to himself, and so ends up in losing his own. That which he acquired through sin, destroys also that which he acquired righteously. Then speedily man dies and leaves all behind, and the bird—that ■ the soul—flies into the air, and mourns for the body, saying, 'While you yet lived nothing was too good for you. You would not rest or sleep until you had acquired a fortune. But now that you are dead you

leave everything behind you. You die, and what profited it either of us? But if you had practised charity with your wealth we should both have benefited.' This," he concluded, "is the meaning of the riddle. Acknowledge the truth of it and I shall take you again to me."

She lifted her eyes and looked long at him. Then she recognised him and knew him as her husband. She sprang to her feet and fell on his neck and together they wept in a long embrace. And they rejoiced greatly and made a great feast.

The captain, in great fear, fell to his knees and prayed for his life. The Talmud Chocham said, "Because you have not lain with my wife I will spare your life. But because you have taken that which was not yours I will take that which is yours." So the captain left his wealth with the Talmud Chocham, and went out, happy to be granted his life.

They remained living in the island, leading a life of great piety, enjoying their peace and wealth in each other's company. Often they told one another of all that had happened. Nevertheless they were both sad about their children who they thought had been drowned.

Some time later it was so hot that it was impossible to sleep at night. So stifling was it that all the sailors in the port left their ships and went on land to while away the evening. Among these were also the two lost sons, unaware of the nearness of their parents.

To make the night pass the more speedily they said to one another, "Let us tell riddles to while away the night." Everyone was pleased and it was arranged that ten gulden should be given to the solver of the riddle; but if no one guessed the answer, the money should be given to the one who had set the riddle. It was readily agreed that the two boys were to give their riddles first, as they were considered cleverer than the rest.

So the boys began: "We see an exceptionally beautiful girl. But she is blind. She shows a beautifully graceful body, but it is not in being. She rises early each morning, but none see her all day. In the evening she comes again, clad in costly jewels, such jewels that never were created. With closed eyes we seek her; with open eyes she vanishes. That is the riddle; solve it if you can."

The whole company was silent, wondering at the strange riddle, but none could essay its solution.

Among them sat an old merchant who wished to force some foolish meaning on the assemblage as the correct answer, but the boys would not have it. A discussion followed, and eventually a long noisy wrangle broke out, lasting till dawn. Nevertheless none knew who had really won the ten gulden. At this the captain suggested that they should go to the castle and let the duke choose the winner. They agreed and went to the duke, who said, "What brings you here so early?"

But when the duke heard the riddle, he was overcome with emotion. He looked at the boys and recognised them, as they were still young and had not changed much. He, however, concealed his feelings and said to them, "How do you know that the merchant's answer is not the right one?"

"Sir," they replied, "our father was a very learned man and he composed the riddle and the answer, so that none but our father or we can give the right answer."

"Then," said the duke, "if I give you the right answer, am I your father?"

"If anyone gives us the true solution," they answered, "he must indeed be our father, because only he told us the riddle, and we have spoken of it to no one."

"If you will listen to me," returned the Duke, "I may give you the right answer. According to my understanding, the beautiful maiden is the youth of young men. They think of nought all day except of beautiful damsels. At night, too, in dreams, they see beautiful girls, but not with their eyes because the dark nights shew them in dreams, but when the eyes are open they are not to be seen: that is why the beautiful maiden is blind. In the morning the dreams vanish once again, but when night comes she shews herself again in pretty jewels—uncreated gems not present in this world, things seen only in dreams. This is the solution: if you acknowledge it, I will declare you my children."

The lads wondered at this reply. And suddenly they recognised their father. And in a moment their father and mother sprang from their seats and embraced and kissed their sons and they lifted up their voices and wept together, and all saw that they were their children.

The king made a great feast for all his subjects and they all rejoiced together, for his children were now noble. And he taught his children the moral of all that had befallen them, and exhorted

them to remain for ever devout in the service of God. And He would always help them. "If God deals adversely with a person," he said, "his friends are silent and vanish and do not help or counsel him. They go away from him and say he is good for nothing, and he is left alone."

"And when the Lord would do one ill,  
Then are all one's best friends still.  
None will help him pursue the foe.  
All turn away, and wish him woe.  
So he remains in his despair.  
Of thousand friends not one is there.  
But when the Lord's goodwill is come,  
Then are his greatest foes struck dumb."

The sailors saw and heard all the things that had happened, and many became Jews. And in that port a fine new community grew up.

Thus we learn that we must be patient and accept everything in a good spirit. And if one cannot give to the poor, one should at least comfort them, for God remembers for good, and protects from evil.

"So God remembering his own for good,  
Will guard his own from every ill;  
And end our weary exile, and fulfil  
His ancient promise to rejoice his band  
Once more in our holy land.  
Oh, with what longing do I write,  
That God in mercy will give his own, respite!  
And when we are as pious as we should be,  
He will show us all that we should see."

## A TALE

By RABBI NAHMAN OF BRATZLAV

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav, born 1770, died 1811, the founder of the Hassidic sect of Bratzlav, was a great grandson of the Besht, the founder of Hassidism. In addition to Hassidic interpretations of the scriptures and moral treatises, his works include a collection of tales, written down by his disciple Nathan in Yiddish and Hebrew, as the master told them. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, "these works may best be described as a conglomeration of nonsense, philosophic truths, poetry and masterful pictures of the life and customs of Nahman's time."

Other writers like Buber, Kahan and Horodetzky are much more enthusiastic, and Horodetzky, for instance, writes :

" Rabbi Nahman told fairy tales, not for the sake of their artistic beauty, but for the sake of heaven, for the sake of Hassidism, his Hassidism. 'The Zaddik,' said Rabbi Nahman, 'is sometimes obliged to weave stories of worldly life around his doctrine, because he cannot always proclaim it openly, even as we cannot always give a sick man his medicine without first coating it. The Torah itself is wrapped round with stories and tales, without which ■ would have been impossible for it to be handed down.'

" Rabbi Nahman was unique as a narrator of fairy tales, not only in Hassidism, but in the whole of the older Jewish literature. He wrote thirteen tales, the products of his poetic imagination, tales about mankind, animals, birds, mountains, valleys, oceans and deserts. He wrote also about evil spirits and ghosts. He took the subject-matter for his tales from anywhere and he understood how to give ■ form and to spiritualise it. His tales are full of a rich and wild imagination. Rabbi Nahman's tales are a treasure of the older Jewish literature, and especially so of Hassidic literature. They were read and enjoyed by thousands of people, and they became popular and really national works. Rabbi Nahman first told his stories to his Hassidim in Yiddish, and he gave instructions that they should be published after his death in Yiddish, and that they should also be translated and published in Hebrew."

Sometimes there are passages in Rabbi Nahman's tales that are reminiscent of something similar in Grimm or Andersen, but that ■ clearly because these great story-tellers must have drawn their material from a common source. For Rabbi Nahman died in 1811, at the age

of forty-one, while the Grimms did not publish the first volume of their fairy-tales till 1812, the second volume following in 1814 and the third in 1822, and Andersen was not born till 1805.

ONCE upon a time there was a king, and the king had six sons and one daughter. He was very fond of the daughter. But one day he was annoyed with her, and the word escaped from his tongue—May the evil one take you ! That night she went into her room, and in the morning no one knew where she was. The king was full of grief and he went to look for her. And the king's second in command rose up because he saw the king was full of grief, and he asked them to give him a servant and a horse and money for the journey, and he went to look for her.

He searched for a very long time, and he went into the desert until he saw a road, and he pondered : " Here I have been going for a long time in the desert and I cannot find her ; perhaps if I go along the road, I may come to a town." So he went on for a long time, and in the end he saw a castle and many soldiers standing all about. And the castle was very beautiful, and the soldiers looked very fine, and he was afraid of the soldiers, because they might not let him go inside. But he reflected : " I will try." So he left his horse, and went up to the castle, and he was allowed to go in, and he went from one room into another, and he was not prevented. And he came to a palace, where he saw the king sitting in his crown, and many soldiers standing around, and playing on instruments before him, and it was very beautiful and very fine.

And neither the king nor anyone asked him anything, and he saw good food there, and he went and ate. And then he went, and lay down in a corner to see what would happen. And he saw the king order the queen to be brought. And they went to bring her. And bands played and sang because the queen was brought and she was seated beside him, and she was the daughter of the king, and he recognised her. And then the queen looked, and she saw someone lying in a corner, and she recognised him, and she went up to him, and she asked him : " Do you know me ? " And he answered : " Yes, I know you. You are the daughter of the king." And he asked her : " How do you come here ? " And she answered : " Because the word escaped from my

father's tongue—May the evil one take you! This is the place that ■ evil."

So ■ told her that her father was full of grief, and that he was looking for her many years, and he asked her : " How can I get you out of here ? " And she answered : " You cannot get me out of here unless you choose a place and sit there for a year, and all that year you long for me, long to get me out of here. And whenever you have time, you must do nothing but long for me and hope to get me out of here, and you must fast, and on the last day of the year you must fast and not sleep the entire twenty-four hours."

And he went away and did all that, and at the end of the year, on the last day of the year, he fasted, and he did not sleep, and he rose up, and went to the daughter of the king to take her away. Then he saw a tree, and very lovely apples on it, and he was filled with longing, and he ate one of them. And as soon as he ate the apple, he fell down, and sleep came upon him, and he slept a very long time. The servant tried to wake him but could not rouse him. Then, when he awoke from his sleep he asked his servant : " Where am I ? " And he told him the whole story. " You have been sleeping for many years, and I have kept myself alive by eating the fruit."

And he was full of grief, and he went to the daughter of the king, and she wept before him. " Because of one day, because you could not restrain yourself and you ate the apple, you have lost everything. If you had come that day you would have got me out of here.

" But I know that it is very hard not to eat, especially on the last day. That is why the evil spirit is so powerful. Go, therefore, and choose another place, and sit there again for a year, and on the last day you may eat, but you must not sleep, and you must not drink any wine, so that you should not fall asleep. The great thing is sleep."

So he went away and did so. On the last day he went again, and he saw a spring running, and the water of the spring was red and the smell was of wine. So he asked his servant : " Have you seen such a thing ? This is a spring, so there should be water in it, but the water is red, and the smell is of wine." And he went up and tasted a little of the spring, and he immediately fell down and slept for many years.

Seventy years passed. And many armies went by, and the servant hid himself from the armies. Then a chariot came up, and in it sat the daughter of the king, and she went out of the chariot and sat down beside him and she recognised him and tried to wake him, but she could not rouse him. And she began to weep, because after so many torments and troubles all these years, she said, "during which you have struggled and laboured to be able to get me out of here, you have on account of one day, when you might have done it, lost everything." And she wept terribly and she said: "It is a great pity for you and for me. I am here such a long time, and I cannot get away." Then she took a shawl from her head, and she wrote on it with her tears, and she placed it beside him, and she went and sat down in the chariot, and she drove away.

Then he woke up, and he asked the servant: "Where am I?" And he told him the whole story—how many armies had passed by, and how a chariot had come up, and how she had wept over him. And he looked and saw the shawl lying beside him, and he asked: "Where does this come from?" And he answered him: "She left it here, and wrote on it with her tears." So he took up the shawl and lifted it to the sun, and he read what was written there—all her lamenting and her weeping and how that day she had left the castle, and that he should now search for a golden mountain on which there is a castle of pearl, "and there you will find me." So he left the servant, and went off by himself to look for her, and he searched for many years.

Then he thought: "In the cities there is no golden mountain with a castle of pearl on it." For he knew his geography very well. "So I shall go into the desert, and search for her there." Then he went into the desert and looked for her many, many years. And he saw a giant, of superhuman height and he carried a big tree—bigger than any that is found in the places where people live. And the giant asked him: "Who are you?" And he answered: "I am a man." And the giant was astonished, and he said: "Here am I such a long time in the desert and I have never yet seen a man." And he told him the whole story, how he was searching for a golden mountain with a castle of pearl on it. And the giant answered: "There is no such thing. They have been telling you stupid tales." So he began to cry, and said: "I am sure it exists." So he said to him: "If you want to listen

to me, ■ is a foolish story, but if you insist, I have power over all the beasts, and for your sake I shall summon them all to come here. They run all over the world. Maybe one of them will know about your mountain and the castle." So he called all the beasts, large and small, and he questioned them, and they all answered that they had never seen it. So he said : " Do you see—they have been telling you stupid tales. If you want to listen to me, turn back because there is no such thing in the world."

But the king's second-in-command insisted, and he said : " I am sure it exists." So he said to him : " I have a brother in the desert, and he has power over all the birds. Perhaps they will know, because they fly high up in the air ; maybe they have seen the mountain and the castle. Go to him and tell him that I have sent you to him." So he went there to look for him, and again he met a giant, and he, too, carried a huge tree, and he also questioned him, as the first had questioned him, and he replied and told him the whole story, and how his brother had sent him here. And he also told him that there was no such thing. But the king's second-in-command was firm and said that he was sure it existed. So he said to him : " I have power over all the birds." And he called them all together, and he questioned them, little and big, and they all answered that they did not know of any such mountain with such a castle. So he said to him : " Do you see ? There is no such thing in the world." But the king's second-in-command insisted and said he was sure it existed. So he said to him : " In this same desert I have a brother, who has power over all the winds, and they run all over the world. Perhaps they know."

So he went on for many years searching, until he met another giant and he, too, was carrying a big tree. And he asked him the same thing, and he answered by telling him the whole story. And this giant, too, tried to persuade him to give up the search, but the king's second-in-command pleaded with him so earnestly that he said that he would help him, and that for his sake he would call there all the winds and question them. So he summoned them, and all the winds came, and he questioned them all, but none of them knew of the mountain and the castle. So he said to him : " You see that you have been told a stupid tale." Then the king's second-in-command began to weep and he said : " I know that it exists."

Meanwhile he saw that another wind had come up, and the giant who had power over him was angry and said : " Why did you come so late ? Did I not call all the winds to come here ? " And the wind answered him : " I have come late because I had to carry the daughter of a king to a golden mountain on which there is a pearl castle." So the king's second-in-command was full of joy, and the giant who had power over the winds asked the wind : " What thing is dear in that place ? " And the wind replied : " Everything is dear in that place." And the giant who had power over the winds said to the king's second-in-command : " You have been searching for such a long time, and you have had so many difficulties. It may be that you will find yourself in difficulties because of lack of money. So I will give you a vessel and when you put your hand inside you will take out money." And he told the wind to carry him there.

So the storm wind came and carried him to the gate, and soldiers stood there and would not allow him to go into the town. So he put his hand into the vessel and took out money, and gave it to them. And he went into the town. It was a beautiful town. And he went up to a rich man and arranged to board with him, because he would have to stay there a long time, for he would have to plan very cleverly how to get her out of there.

How he got her out of there, he did not relate. In the end he got her out of there. Amen !

## THE EXCHANGE

By MENDELE MOCHER SEFORIM

*Translated by* JOSEPH LEFTWICH

Mendele Mocher Seforim—Mendele the Bookseller—(Shalom Jacob Abramovitch), born in 1835 in the province of Minsk, in White Russia, died 1917. One of the greatest Yiddish writers, the actual founder of modern Yiddish literature, popularly referred to as its "grandfather." After studying at the Beth Hamedrash, he felt the call to write. He threw in his lot with a beggar, Abraham the Lame (who afterwards served as a model for his famous work "Fishke the Lame"), and travelled with him through the towns and townships of the Ukraine, Russia and Lithuania, begging and spending the night in the Beth Hamedrash or the casual wards provided by the local Jewish communities. He gathered on these journeys much of the material he later used in his books and stories. He became acquainted with the Yiddish and Hebrew writer Gotlober, whose daughter taught him Russian, German, and arithmetic and, in 1856, he passed an examination and became a teacher in the Jewish Government school at Kamenetz. In 1858 he settled in Berditchev, and devoted himself to Hebrew literature, and he had already achieved a big reputation in Hebrew when he turned to writing Yiddish. His "Fishke the Lame" appeared in 1869. He left Berditchev because of the resentment roused by a satire he published on the leaders of the local Jewish community. He settled in Jitomir in 1873 and graduated at the Rabbinical Seminary there. His "Klatche" (Nag) appeared about that time. His "Travels of Benjamin the Third," which appeared in 1878, created a storm. The well-known Polish writer, Clemence Junosza, translated it into Polish as "The Jewish Don Quixote." Junosza also translated the "Nag" into Polish. In 1888-9 Mendele published the first parts of his greatest work "The Wish Finger," where he paints a complete picture of Jewish life in the first half of the nineteenth century. He worked on it for many years, and ■ was not until 1911 that it was for the first time published in full.

In addition to his great influence on Yiddish literature, Mendele also exercised a tremendous influence on the development of Hebrew literature, to which he returned in his later years, creating several masterpieces of modern Hebrew literature. His seventy-fifth birthday in 1910 was a festive day among Jews all over the world and he received hundreds of thousands of telegrams of greeting from all parts of the globe. May be described as the Chaucer of Yiddish literature.

THE month of Adar, says the *Gemarah*, is the plenitude of joy—so Jews rejoice for all they are worth. The snow melts, the roads are covered with slush and Jews splashed and bespattered till above their girdles, begin to rack their brains to discover a way of providing for Passover—in short, it is a time of rejoicing.

In this same month I receive a letter from someone I know in Glupsk, telling me to do all I can to get to his place as quickly as possible, lock, stock and barrel, with my cart and my bundles of books, in order to make an exchange—in return for my old class of goods he would give me new up-to-date stuff, all sorts of anthologies and miscellanies, self-teaching methods, poetry, sketches, enthralling novels, tales, psychological, economic, social and lots more, with many other fine things, like Hanukah lamps and such things.

This acquaintance of mine has many a trade, but none of them paid—he is a bookseller, and a business go-between, a bit of an author, a bit of a publisher, and on top of that, he is a poor man, really a very poor man—may none of us ever be in such a plight.

The fact of the matter is that I didn't particularly believe him, knowing him, between ourselves, to be a liar—a liar like a lot of people in business, who exaggerate in buying and selling. Their stuff is marvellous, and the other fellow's is rubbish.

So that when I read his letter, in which he dismissed my old stock as of no account, and praised his new stock to the skies, my comment was—Says you!

All the same, I reflected that going down to Glupsk wasn't a bad idea. There was no point in hoarding my stock. I was fed up with it. The other lot might be worse, but good-bad, better-worse, one must trade. As the peasants put it—Even if it's a worse broom, as long as it's new.

I wanted to leave at once, so that I should reach Glupsk in time for Purim, to see the celebrated Glupsk Purim-players who all the year round are just ordinary fools, but when Purim comes round are suddenly transformed into perfect Solomons, dropping pearls of wisdom as if they came from a sack full of holes. Like drunkards who pick on Purim as the one day on which they are sober.

But fate was against me. Something would crop up to keep me at home for a few more days.

When I set out, it was my intention to be back home for Passover, please God. So before I left I saw to it that there would be

everything in the house a Jew needs for such a festival. I asked Leib the Melamed to keep me in mind about the Matzo-Shmurah, and told my wife on no account to be sparing of raisins or water and to make raisin wine fit for a king. I also instructed her to buy a sack of potatoes and goose-fat, and a fatted turkey in honour of the festival. Suppose you haven't the money, I said, don't worry about that. Pawn your jewellery, and if necessary, some of the household goods. It'll be all right. Don't grieve. God will bless my journey. You don't imagine it will be otherwise? And when I come back home, please God, we shall have a happy Passover. We shall eat dumplings and pancakes, and drink raisin wine and liquorice, and have a good time.

You see, I provided for everything. But what does God do?

God sent down rain and snow, a kind of barley-soup, water with chunks of ice in it. And the road became so bad that you couldn't move a step—neither cart nor sledge, horse nor foot-slogger. It was awful. I managed with effort to crawl in a day the distance permitted to walk on the Sabbath. Every step took it out of my poor horse. It was drenched in blood and foam. It crawled a couple of steps, and biff! down it went with its head on the ground! It fell, struggled to its feet, went on for a few paces, and fell down again. And I, poor devil, walked at its side, churning up the mud, plastered with it from head to toe—sliding along and falling down every minute—falling and groaning—oh!

I didn't groan only because of myself. But because of my poor horse, my poor, poor little horse. Why should it have to suffer so? And on whose account? Mine! Because I had wanted to get rid of all my old stock I had loaded up the cart with it, more than the poor horse could drag, without any compassion, forgetting that it was cruelty to the animal.

As long as my friend was able to make headway, however difficult, stumbling and falling, falling and struggling up, crawling out of his skin almost, but getting along—I pretended not to notice anything, and even showed him the whip, shouted and goaded him on. But when my horse floundered into a morass somewhere at the foot of a hill, and spread out full length in the mud, stretched out his legs and tail, and lay still, not moving a muscle, my Jewish heart began to upbraid me:

"Idiot of a Jew! Dolt! You've got hold of a poor uncom-

plaining beast, and driven it to death by making it work beyond its strength, by loading it up with those stacks of books of yours, more than it could bear—piles of rubbish ! There's a limit to everything. You load a horse with bricks and stones, but only up to a certain limit, otherwise it will break down under the weight. And you have loaded your horse, a poor, lorn creature, with the whole burden of Jewishness.

"And what is the end of it ? Your animal is suffering, its strength is ebbing away, it can't move from the spot—it is giving up the ghost. Look, see how it lies there in front of you without a sign of life, like a carcase !"

There is no point in prolonging the agony. At first it was "like a carcase." A little later it was a carcase. My horse died !

I was like a captain whose ship has gone down in the middle of the ocean. I stood all alone in the middle of the road. With an ocean of mud and slush all around me. The horse lies dead. The cart ■ in the mud up to the axles. To-morrow is the eve of Passover, and I am down in the dumps. I haven't the faintest idea what to do, or what to set out to do. But a Jew always has God, and when things become too hard to bear, he thinks of His Beloved Name. That is what I did now. It was Minchah time. So I turned my face to the east, said "Pitum Haktoruth," prayed slowly, blissfully, with feeling, spun out my prayers, till the stars appeared. The Lord had heard my prayer, and had shown me a light glimmering in the distance, and had put the thought in my mind that I should go where the light was. So I did that, and went towards the light. I crawled on hands and feet for a good two hours, before I came to a non-Jewish hut, at the back of a big forest. The non-Jew looked at me surlily at first, but when he saw that I kept my head down submissively, he softened and obeyed the commandment about hospitality to strangers. He gave me some baked potatoes, a hot drink and a corner of the barn to sleep in. In the morning I persuaded him to harness a couple of oxen to my cart, and drive me to Boiberick, because Boiberick was the nearest town. In addition to paying him for that, I allowed him to strip the hide off my dead horse, and to keep the horseshoes to remember me by. I did that in the interests of peace, so that a non-Jew should not have cause to say that a Jew doesn't deserve a good turn, because he doesn't show any gratitude.

I arrived at Boiberick between day and night, when there wasn't

a living soul in the street. Everybody, old and young, was already in Synagogue. The fact is that I was very glad to find it so.

A Jew loves to poke his nose everywhere, you know. He is fond of fingering everything. He wants to know everything that is going on. Well then, what do you imagine would happen if they saw me, a well-known Jew, Mendele Mocher Seforim, come driving up in my cart with a couple of oxen? There would probably be a rush of young and old, with a terrible commotion and a lot of fuss, and they would raise a hurrah in honour of me. But I am a simple sort of a Jew. I don't want any honours, and try to dodge them.

I happen to have an old friend in Boiberick, a bookseller like myself, and known throughout all the Dispersion of Israel by the name of Hendel Boiberick of Boiberick. So I told the non-Jew to drive me to Hendel's house.

On the way I had plenty of time for reflection. Oxen are not very fast movers. They go step by step, deliberately, slowly, unhurriedly, and chew the cud. So I sat in the cart, and ruminated over all the unpleasant things that had happened to me on this journey. Thinking, reflecting, and filled with longing to be back home with my family. It made me sick at heart to think that my festival was all upset, that I would not sit at the head of the table like a king at the side of the queen. I also spared a kind thought for the turkey. No doubt a very nice, fat turkey. It would have tasted delicious. I was devoured by desire and by longing. The oxen plodded along slowly through side turnings and alleys, till they stopped at last outside Hendel's house.

I stood for a while outside the door, with my heart wrung with grief and yearning. Like a man wondering whether his arrival is opportune. Perhaps the master of the house is not in a good humour now.

But what doesn't a Jew do when needs must? Need compels him to thrust himself on other people's charity, to burden other people, to impose on their hospitality when they are not expecting him. I strengthened my heart and put out my hand to open the door. I opened it silently, slowly, yet it made an awful row. Here I am trying to be quiet, and the door is creaking, and rattling as if it were complaining to someone about me. I entered a dark passage, almost crouching. Suddenly the inmates made a rush at me, whooping with joy. They were so happy that they got

flustered, didn't seem to know what they were doing. One of them ran into the room shouting at the top of his voice : " He's come ! He's come ! " Another one shouted for a candle. " Light a candle ! Light a candle ! "

I heard a woman's voice, sweet and gracious, full of affection. And then a woman flung herself at me helter-skelter, on the point of embracing me, kissing me, and pouring out all the time a flood of words, jolly, happy talk mingled with reproaches ; joy and annoyance all in one breath.

" Why are you so late ? " she demanded.

I was bewildered. And when I was going to start explaining what had happened to me, someone lighted a candle, and we all stood there with mouths agape, like a lot of dummies. It was a lovely sight, I tell you.

This ■ what had happened. Hendel had set out with a cart-load of books to sell. He was to have been home by the previous Sabbath, and when he did not arrive his family was grieved. And when I came, 'twixt day and night, and they saw me in the dark, the children had jumped to the conclusion that it was their father, and the wife had thought it was her husband. So they had whooped for joy. And when they realised their mistake they stood staring at me with gaping mouths.

Hendel's wife, poor thing, was heart-broken when she saw that it was not her husband who had arrived, and that he would not rule the board like a king that Passover. But on the other hand, she praised God that he had sent her a friend of her husband's, someone with whom they felt at home, to conduct the Seder. She seated me on a throne of pillows and cushions, at the head of the table, in the place of Hendel, and I kinged it in place of Hendel !

And I, too, praised God that He had wrought a miracle for me ; that He had brought me out of my wanderings into a friendly home to sit this night like a king in Boiberick, and to eat Morur and fish and dumplings, and to read the *Haggadah* in place of Hendel for his wife, with songs and with praise, Hallelujah !

But I wasn't the only one to whom a miracle had happened, and who found himself unexpectedly a king. I discovered a few days later that exactly the same thing had occurred to Hendel.

This is what had happened :

Hendel Boiberick had loaded his cart full of books, and had set out from Boiberick to travel round the district, as was his custom

shortly before Passover. And the same thing happened to Hendel as had happened to Mendele. Snow and rain, mud and slush, ditches and ruts, trouble and vexation all the way. His horse, too, had stumbled and fallen, got up, and floundered in mud. The only difference was that his horse got out of it alive, and mine had died. Not because his horse was stronger or more fit. For the fact ■ that it was a poor starved-looking beast, unsteady on its legs, and with a blemish in its eye. While my horse was in comparison strong and fit and handsome. Only in that part of the country where Hendel travelled the mud was less thick, and didn't do so much damage as the denser mud between Glupsk and Boiberick.

So Hendel and his horse had slowly crawled along, painfully, arduously, and after much exertion and difficulty had come into Kabzansk on the very eve of Passover. He had immediately gone to my house, conducted the Seder for my wife, ate his meal seated on my throne of pillows and cushions, kinged it in place of me, happy that God had provided him with such a refuge.

It was Hendel himself who told me all this when we met on the road after the holidays. We roared with laughing, when we learnt of the exchange.

And when I told Hendel about my journey to Glupsk to exchange old books for new, he pulled a wry face. Then he shook his head and said :

“ Thank God, you got out of it with only the loss of your horse.”

I stared at Hendel in astonishment.

“ Why do you look at me like that, Mendele ? ” he said. “ I congratulate you on the death of your horse. For that kept you from going to Glupsk, and doing a bad stroke of business there. You ought to be glad, upon my life, that you didn't make that exchange. It's a misfortune, it's a curse, it's a calamity, not a business. I give you my word, I envy you. You've got a chance now to get rid of this rotten book-selling business. To the devil with it, old books and new ! I wish my horse had dropped dead a year ago. It would have saved me getting into a mess with all this new stuff, and losing a pile of money. They're not books, man ! They're stones, logs of wood ! I tell you, I've lost money, but that doesn't worry me so much as the loss of my self-respect. I've had to submit to indignities by the bushel on account of this wonderful stuff. What sort of people have I been dealing with ? Poor,

sinful folk, Yeshibah-students with a craving for secular education, who haven't a penny-piece to their name ; with youngsters who talk big, but when it comes to knowing things, there's nothing doing ; with fellows who can't pronounce their Hebrew properly. And if once in a blue moon I did come across a grown man to whom I could offer my goods, because I had heard he was of the sort who buy such books, I didn't get much change out of him, either. No, friend Mendele, I want to tell you again that it's a bit of luck that you've lost your horse. I wish to goodness that my horse went to blazes with my books and all ! "

And yet, in spite of Hendel's outburst, do you think that he's given up bookselling ? Not a bit of it ! Hendel is still selling books, just the same as before. And so am I.

That very day that we met on the road, as soon as he had worked off his temper, we bartered a few things—I gave him philosophical works, essays and sermons, and he gave me a lot of *Lamentations* and *Penitential Supplication Prayers*. For it was just the time for lamentation. Spring was coming, and things were beginning to grow and sprout everywhere, and the Children of Israel were preparing to weep and fast.

## THE MIRACLE ON THE SEA

By ISAAC LOEB PERETZ

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

Isaac Leib Peretz, born 1852 at Samoszcz, in the Province of Lublin, in Poland. Died in Warsaw in 1915, of heart failure, while sitting at his desk writing the first lines of a poem, which were then set to music, and served as his death elegy.

Traced his descent from Spain; his immediate forebears came to Poland from Frankfurt-on-the-Main. Attended Chedar and the Yeshibah and revered Maimonides. Began writing in Hebrew. Studied for the Russian Bar in Warsaw, and was for ten years a prosperous lawyer. Represented Count Zamojsky's interests in the Zamoszcz area. Afterwards became an official of the Warsaw Jewish Community, retaining the position for 25 years, till his death.

During his first years in Warsaw he threw in his lot with the Hebraists there but he soon felt the need to speak to the Jewish masses in the language they understood. "The working class," he said, "provides a field for work. It is an unhappy people, but able; it must be educated—it has been overlooked. We must speak to them in their own tongue. That is why I write in Yiddish. I want to create a Yiddish literature, to speak and write to the people in their language."

Peretz has been described as "the incomparable master and stylist of Yiddish literature." "He is the banner of Yiddish literature," the famous Yiddish critic, Niger, says, "he removed the barriers that had shut in Yiddish literature. He did not confine himself to any particular tendency in Jewish life and creation—he tried all tendencies and forms."

He was the centre of the great Yiddish literary movement, and the younger men flocked to Warsaw to sit at his feet and gain from him inspiration. One of the three founders of Yiddish literature—Mendele Mocher Seforim was its "Grandfather," Shalom Aleichem introduced humour into Yiddish literature, Peretz made it a cultural force, and won the name of the "Father of Yiddish literature."

For several decades, till his death, Peretz combined his immense literary, cultural and social activity with the daily duties of an official of the Warsaw Jewish Community. His official duties often became irksome to him, and interfered with his real work, and he thought several times of resigning, to devote himself entirely to literature, but his friends dissuaded him against the risk of an uncertain livelihood.

He was idolised by the Jewish masses, and when he died over 100,000 Jews followed his funeral. Many streets in Polish towns have been named in honour of Peretz.

Many of his stories have appeared in English, and in other languages.

IN a little cottage, half sunk in the mud of a little fishing village on the coast of Holland, there lived a dumb soul, a Jewish fisherman named Satya. He may have been named after some ancestor of his, who had been named Sadyah. But of this he knew nothing ; he knew little of anything Jewish.

As far back as was known, from father to son, his family had been fishermen, had spent their days and nights upon the sea, and had lived, one isolated Jewish family, among non-Jews. What could he have known of Jewishness ?

Satya caught fish ; his wife repaired his nets and looked after the house ; the children played in the sand, and searched for shells. And when Satya went fishing, and a storm arose, and the lives of those that were on the seas were in peril, neither Satya in his boat, nor his wife and children at home, could say even " Shemah Yisroel ! " Satya gazed silently up to heaven, his wife tore her hair, and looked angrily at the black skies, and the children threw themselves upon the sand, and like all the other children, they cried aloud : " Sancta Maria ! Sancta Maria ! "

And how should they have known better ? The nearest Jewish community was far away, in the town ; it was impossible for them to go there on foot, and the poverty-stricken family, who had hardly enough to eat, could not afford to spend money in travelling. Besides, the sea would not let them go.

Satya's father, Satya's grandfather, and Satya's great-grandfather had all died at sea ; but the sea has a wonderful power of attraction. It is man's greatest enemy, very often a false enemy, and yet men love the sea, they are drawn to it as by magic. It is impossible to tear ourselves away from the sea ; it fascinates us, and we are content to live upon it, we are content to die in it.

One Jewish observance this fisher family retained—Yom Kippur. On the day before, they all rose very early, and taking with them the largest fish of the previous day's catch, the whole family walked to the town. There the fish was handed to the

Shochet, in whose house they stayed over the fast. All day they sat in the Synagogue, listening to the singing of the choir, to the rumbling of the organ, and to the Cantor's recital of the Hebrew prayers. They did not understand one word of it all ; they just looked at the Ark of the Law, and they watched the Cantor in his gold embroidered cap. When the gold embroidered cap stood up, they also stood up, and when the gold embroidered cap sat down, they also sat down. Sometimes Satya fell asleep, and then someone sitting near him nudged him, till he awoke.

And this was the whole of Satya's Yom Kippur. That it was the Great Judgment Day, the Great Day of Atonement, that even the fishes trembled in the waters, of all that took place in Heaven on this dread day, Satya knew nothing. He knew that it was a custom to go to Synagogue on Yom Kippur, to listen to the choir and to the organ, without tasting food all day ; and after " Nileh " (he did not even know that it was called " Nileh "), he knew that he had to go to the Shochet's house for supper.

Probably the Shochet himself knew little more. Holland ! . . . Immediately after supper, Satya and his wife and the children got up, and they said good-bye to the Shochet and his wife, and they walked all through the night, back to the sea.

Not " home " ; back to the sea ! They consistently refused to stay overnight. " Think," argued the Shochet and his wife, " you have not even seen the town." Satya's face clouded. He spoke little ; the sea had taught him silence. He hated the town, it was crowded ; there was no air in it, and no heaven, except a little strip of it that showed between the houses. And he was accustomed to the free life of the sea, where there is a vast expanse of sky, and where it is possible for a man to breathe. " But," people argued with him, " the sea is your enemy, it is your death." " A kindly death," he replied. Satya wanted to die as his father and his grandfather had died, in full health, upon the sea ; he did not want to lie on a bed, and suffer, God knows how long, and then be buried in the hard earth—Ugh ! He felt cold all over, when he thought of such a burial.

So they walked all through the night, back to the sea.

And when the dawn broke, and they saw the golden shimmer of the sandheaps, and the reflection of the rising sun in the waters of the sea, they were overwhelmed with joy, and they clapped their hands. A bridegroom could not greet his bride more joyfully.

And so it went on from year to year . . . custom remained custom. And the custom is a mix-up of a fast, a choir and an organ, together with a huge fish, and a supper after " Nileh " in the Shochet's house, the parting and the good wishes, all rolled into one. And this mix-up, ■ of it together, is the single thread which binds Satya to all-Israel.

And it came to pass about dawn, when the east was beginning to redden, that the sea awoke silently, breathing softly, so that one could scarcely hear its murmuring, and it stretched itself lazily, half dreamily, and then it drew back. . . . Somewhere, white wings flapped in the air, a bird cried out, and again it was still. Silent shapes flew across the sea, golden shadows glided over the yellow sands. The fishermen's huts on the shore are shut. One door opens, and Satya comes out.

It is the day before Yom Kippur. Satya's face is earnest and composed, and his eyes are gleaming. He is going to perform a holy duty, he is going out to find a fish for Yom Kippur. He takes hold of the chain, by which his boat is fastened to the shore, and the chain falls and clangs. The fishermen thrust their heads through the little windows of their homes, and they warn Satya not to go. Don't! . . .

Quietly, calmly, the sea spreads far and wide, and is lost in the fresh, laughing morning skies. There is scarce a breath of air, there is not a ripple upon the surface, save near the shore ; and there, even as in the face of a good, kindhearted mother, silvery dimpled smiles are dancing among the ripples. And the sea murmurs softly, and it tells a wonderful story to the scattered rocks, all overgrown with great weeds and water-plants, that look like hair growing upon their heads. And the sea strokes their hair, smilingly, playfully. . . . But the fishermen know the sea well, and they will not trust it. And they warn Satya not to venture out upon it. Don't! . . . The sea rocks gently, and so it will continue to rock, faster and faster, and then its playfulness will fall away, and it will change to earnest, and the soft murmurings will grow into clamourings and thunder, and the ripples will rise up as waves, and will swallow boats and ships, even as the Leviathan swallows little fishes.

Don't! . . .

A barefooted old fisherman, with a head of uncovered, shaggy

grey hair, with a face wrinkled like the sea, but without its false sweet smile, approaches Satya, and taking him by the arm, he points up at the sky : " Look ! " And upon the edge of the horizon, he shows him a tiny speck, which only a fisherman's eye can discern. " That grows into a cloud," he remarks quietly. " I shall be back long before then," answers Satya, " I am going to catch only one fish." The old man's face grows hard and grave. " You have a wife and children, Satya." " And a God in Heaven," Satya answers, pushing off his boat, and jumping in. Lightly as a feather Satya's boat travels across the sea, and the ripples rock it, murmuring softly, lovingly, and enfold it with their most beautiful froth pearls. And the old fisherman stands on the shore, and mutters : " Sancta Maria ! Sancta Maria ! "

The boat glides easily across the sea. Satya throws his net skilfully, and at once it grows heavy. Exerting all his strength, Satya slowly raises the net, and it is full of weeds and star-fish . . . there is not even a single small fish entangled in the meshes. The old fisherman upon the shore has lost sight of the boat. And Satya pulls up his net for the third and the fourth time ; it is not easy to pull the net up, for it is heavy, and it is filled with seaweeds, and with all manner of waterplants ; but there is not a single fish among it all. The sea is now rocking more violently. The sun is high in the heavens, but it is pale, moist and weeping. And the black speck upon the edge of the horizon spreads out like a long snake, and it grows darker and darker, and it moves rapidly towards the sun.

It is noon, and Satya is still on the sea, searching for his fish. " God does not wish me to observe the custom this year," he mutters sadly, and his heart grows heavy. " I must have sinned against Him, and He will not accept my offering." He grips his oars, and turns the boat towards home ; but immediately the spray dashes into his face, and looking round, he sees a huge, marvellous golden fish, sporting quite close to him, playfully throwing the water up with its tail. " There ! " shouts Satya excitedly, " there is my fish ! " Surely God had answered him out of his anguish of heart, out of his longing, that he might fulfil his holy duty. And he is off, after that fish ! The sea grows agitated and enraged ; the waves rise higher and higher. The sun is now almost hidden by clouds, but its rays force themselves

through, and beat down upon Satya. The fish is breasting the waves, and Satya's boat flies after it, quickly. Suddenly the fish is lost to sight ; a wave has rolled up between them, and the boat ■ being tossed high upon the crest of a huge wave, whipped up and swollen by the storm. "I am befooled ; my eyes are deceiving me," Satya mutters to himself ; and he ■ about to turn the boat towards home, when suddenly the wave subsides as if it had been sucked into the sea, the fish comes up, and looks at him imploringly with its great eyes, as if appealing to be taken . . . so that Satya might fulfil in him his holy duty. Satya turns, and immediately the fish has vanished ; a huge wave rolls once more between them, and the sea begins its song again. It is no soft, pleasing melody the sea is singing ; it is an angry outburst against the rash human who has dared it in its wrath. As if afraid of its anger, the sun hides behind a mass of cloud, and the wind breaks loose with a savage roar. It rages wildly, and it swirls and beats upon the sea, but the sea becomes more angry, and it shouts and thunders as if a thousand drums were being beaten within its bosom.

Satya determines to return, and he gathers his nets into the boat. He grips his oars, and he rows back with all his strength. The veins swell and stand out upon his hands, as if about to burst. Huge waves, high as mountains, toss his boat, up and down like an empty nutshell ; the heavens are black, the sea rages tempestuously, and Satya rows back towards his home, his heart beating like the wild flood about him. Suddenly there is something drifting alongside his boat ; it is a human form—the body of a woman, drowned or drowning. Her black raven hair is spread out like a net before her. His wife's hair is black like that ! And her hands are white, just like the hands of his wife ! And a voice calls " Help ! " It is she, the mother of his children. She must have followed him, and she is drowning, she is calling for help ! Satya turns his boat towards her, but the sea thrusts him back, huge waves roll over her, and the storm shouts and shrieks. And above it all, he hears her voice, " Help, Satya ! Help ! " Satya exerts all his strength in one mighty effort. He is near her, her hair has already gone under, and her form is sinking ; with his oars he pulls her towards him, and he is reaching over to pull her into the boat when suddenly a huge wave pushes  
7, and the form has disappeared,

"An illusion!" he mutters, remembering his experience with the marvellous golden fish. He looks towards the shore, and he sees the lights gleaming through the windows of the little fisher huts.

"Yom Kippur!" he cries, and he drops his oars.

"Do with me what you will!" he calls up into heaven, "I will not row on Yom Kippur!" The wind rages madly, the waves toss his boat up and down, and Satya is sitting quietly, his hands resting on his knees; his eyes are wide open, and he looks calmly up to the frowning heavens, then down to the boiling, seething seas. "Do with me what you will!" he repeats aloud. "Your Will be done, Oh God!" He seems to hear the choir, accompanied by the organ, singing in the Synagogue, and he joins in—this dumb, silent soul, who has only this solemn melody, with which to communicate with his God! And as he sings, the heavens grow blacker and blacker, the waves rise higher and higher, the storm rages more fiercely, and his boat is tossed from one mountain wave to another. One wave carries away his oars, another comes up from behind, and follows him with mouth gaping, ready to swallow him. The wind shrieks like a thousand wolves, and amid all this clamour, Satya calmly sings "Mi Yenuach, Umi Yenui," and the choir of the Synagogue, accompanied by the organ, ■ singing with him. The waves break against his boat, and Satya determines that he will die like this, singing.

Suddenly his boat is overturned; but Satya ■ not yet destined to die. Two forms, nebulous as if woven out of the mist, are walking barefoot on the sea, their hair streams behind them, and their eyes gleam like fire. And as Satya's boat is overturned, they hold him up, between them, and they walk with him across the waves, as over mountains, through storm and tumult. Satya tries to speak to them, but they stop him, saying: "Sing, Satya! Sing! Your song will calm the fury of the seas!"

And turning round, Satya sees his boat following them, and the golden fish is in the meshes of the net. They left him on the shore, and when he came home, he found the Shochet and his wife in his hut. There had been a fire in the town, so they had come to him, to be his guests over the fast.

And the golden fish was killed, and custom remained custom.

## PASSOVER IN A VILLAGE

By SHALOM ALEICHEM

*Translated by HANNAH BERMAN*

Shalom Aleichem (Shalom Rabinovitch), born 1859, in the Province of Poltava, in Russia; died in New York in 1916. The outstanding humorist in Yiddish literature. First wrote in Hebrew, his first tales appearing when he was fifteen, in the "Hamelitz" and "Hazeфирah." At twenty-one he was appointed Rabbi at the township of Lubni, in Poltava. Three years later, he began to publish in Yiddish. When the War broke out he was on holiday with his family in Germany, but managed to escape to Copenhagen and thence to New York. His output is enormous. After Mendele he is the most important delineator of Jewish Ghetto life in Russia. The second of the three pillars of Yiddish literature—Mendele, Shalom Aleichem, Peretz. His "Menahem Mendel" ■ the typical Jewish "luftmensh," always busy with wonderful schemes, which all come to nothing. His "Tevya the Dairyman" ■ the embodiment of the Jewish small-town inhabitant, philosophic, kindly and full of humour.

LET winds blow. Let storms rage. Let the world turn upside down. The old oak, which has been standing since the creation of the world, and whose roots reach to God-knows-where—what does he care for winds? What are storms to him?

The old tree is not a symbol—it is a living being, a man whose name is Nachman Veribivker of Veribivka. He is a tall Jew, broad-shouldered, a giant. The townspeople are envious of his strength, and make fun of him. "Peace be unto you. How is a Jew in health?" Nachman knows he is being made fun of. He bends his shoulders so as to look more Jewish. But it is useless. He is too big.

Nachman has lived in the village a long time. "Our 'Lachman'," the peasants call him. They look upon him as a good man, with brains. They like to have a chat with him. They follow his advice: "What are we to do about bread?" "Lachman" has an almanack, and he knows whether bread will be cheap or dear this year. He goes to the town, and so knows what is doing in the world.

It would be very hard to imagine Veribivka without Nachman. Not only was his grandfather, Feitel, born in Veribivka, but his grandfather, Arya. He was a clever Jew and a wit. He used to say that the village was called Veribivka because Arya Veribivka lived in it, because before Veribivka was Veribivka, he, Arya Veribivker was already Arya Veribivker. That's what his grandfather used to say. The Jews of those times !

And do you think Arya Veribivker said this for no reason ? Arya was not an ordinary man who made jokes without reason. He meant that the catastrophes of his day were Jewish tragedies. At that time they already talked of driving the Jews out of villages. And not only talked but drove them out. All the Jews were driven out, excepting Arya Veribivker. It may be that even the governor of the district could do nothing, because Arya Veribivker proved that according to the law, he could not be driven out. The Jews of those times !

Certainly, if one has inherited such a privilege, and is independent, one can laugh at the whole world. What did our Nachman Veribivker care about uprisings, the limitations of the Pale, of decrees ? What did Nachman care about the wicked Gentile Kuratchka and the papers he brought from the court ? Kuratchka was a short peasant with short fingers. He wore a smock and high boots, and a silver chain and a watch like a gentleman. He was a clerk of the court. And he read all the papers which abused and vilified the Jews.

Personally, Kuratchka was not a bad sort. He was a neighbour of Nachman and pretended to be a friend. When Kuratchka had the toothache, Nachman gave him a lotion. When Kuratchka's wife was brought to bed of a child, Nachman's wife nursed her. But for some time, the devil knows why, Kuratchka had been reading the anti-Semitic papers, and he was an altered man. "Esau began to talk in him." He was always bringing home news of new governors, new decrees from the minister, and new edicts against Jews. Each time, Nachman's heart was torn. But he did not let the Gentile know of it. He listened to him with a smile, and held out the palm of his hand as if to say, "When hair grows here."

Let governors change. Let ministers write decrees. What concern ■ it of Nachman Veribivker of Veribivka ?

Nachman lived comfortably. That is, not as comfortably as his grandfather Arya had lived. Those were different times. One might almost say that the whole of Veribivka belonged to Arya. He had the inn, the store, a mill, a granary. He made money with spoons and plates, as they say. But, that was long ago. To-day, all these things are gone. No more inn ; no more store ; no more granary. The question is why, in that case, does Nachman live in the village ? Where then should he live ? In the earth ? Just let him sell his house, and he will be Nachman Veribivker no more. He will be a dependent, a stranger. As it is, he has at least a corner of his own, a house to live in, and a garden. His wife and daughters cultivate the garden. And if the Lord helps them, they have greens for the summer, and potatoes for the whole winter, until long after the Passover. But, one cannot live on potatoes alone. It is said that one wants bread with potatoes. And when there's no bread, a Jew takes his stick, and goes through the village in search of business. He never comes home empty-handed. What the Lord destines, he buys—some old iron, a bundle of rags, an old sack, or else a hide. The hide is stretched and dried, and is taken to the town, to Abraham-Elijah the tanner. And on all these one either earns or loses money.

Abraham-Elijah the tanner, a man with a bluish nose and fingers as black as ink, laughs at Nachman, because he is so coarsened through living with Gentiles that he even speaks like them.

Yes, coarsened. Nachman feels it himself. He grows coarser each year. Oh, if his grandfather Reb Arya—peace be unto him !—could see his grandson. He had been a practical man, but had also been a scholar. He knew whole passages of Psalms and the prayers off by heart. The Jews of those times ! And what does he, Nachman, know ? He can only just say his prayers. It's well he knows that much. His children will know even less. When he looks at his children, how they grow to the ceiling, broad and tall like himself, and can neither read nor write, his heart grows heavy. More than all, his heart aches for his youngest child, who is called Feitel, after his father. He was a clever child, this Feitel. He was smaller in build, more refined, more Jewish than the others. And he had brains. He was shown the Hebrew alphabet once in a prayer-book and he never again confused one

letter with the other. Such a fine child to grow up in a village among calves and pigs ! He plays with Kuratchka's son, Fedoka. He rides on the one stick with him. They both chase the one cat. They both dig the same hole. They do together everything children can do. Nachman is sorry to see his child playing with the Gentile child. It withers him, as if he were a tree that had been stricken by lightning.

. . . . .

Fedoka is a smart little boy. He has a pleasant face and a dimpled chin, and flaxen hair. He loves Feitel, and Feitel does not dislike him. All the winter each child slept on his father's stove. They went to the windows and longed for one another. They seldom met. But now the long angry winter is over. The black earth throws off her cold white mantle. The sun shines ; and the wind blows. A little blade of grass peeps out. At the foot of the hill the little river murmurs. The calf inhales the soft air through distended nostrils. The cock closes one eye and is lost in meditation. Everything around and about has come to life again. Everything rejoices. It is the Passover eve. Neither Feitel nor Fedoka can be kept indoors. They rush out into God's world which has been opened up for them both. They take each other's hands, and fly down the hill that smiles at them : " Come here, children ! " They leap towards the sun that greets them and calls them : " Come, children ! " When they are tired of running, they sit down on God's earth that knows no Jew and no Gentile, but whispers invitingly : " Children, come to me, to me."

. . . . .

They have much to tell each other, not having met throughout the whole winter. Feitel boasts that he knows the whole Hebrew alphabet. Fedoka boasts that he has a whip. Feitel boasts that it is the eve of Passover. They have *matzos* for the whole festival, and wine. " Do you remember, Fedoka, I gave you a *matzo* last year ? " "*Matzo*," repeats Fedoka. A smile overspreads his pleasant face. It seems he remembers the taste of the *matzo*. " Would you like to have some *matzo* now, fresh *matzo* ? " Is it necessary to ask such a question ? " Then come with me," says Feitel, pointing up the hill which smiled to them invitingly. They climbed the hill. They gazed at the warm sun through their fingers. They threw themselves on

the damp earth which smelled so fresh. Feitel drew out from under his blouse a whole fresh, white *matzo*, covered with holes on both sides. Fedoka licked his fingers in advance. Feitel broke the *matzo* in halves, and gave one half to his friend. "What do you say to the *matzo*, Fedoka?" What could Fedoka say when his mouth was stuffed with *matzo* that crackled between his teeth, and melted under his tongue like snow? One minute, and there was no more *matzo*. "All gone?" Fedoka threw his grey eyes at Feitel's blouse as a cat looks at butter. "Want more?" asked Feitel, looking at Fedoka through his sharp black eyes. What a question! "Then wait a while," said Feitel. "Next year you'll get more." They both laughed at the joke.

And without a word, as if they had already arranged it, they threw themselves on the ground, and rolled down the hill like balls, quickly, quickly downwards.

At the bottom of the hill they stood up, and looked at the murmuring river that ran away to the left. They turned to the right, going farther and farther over the broad fields that were not yet green in all places, but showed signs of being green soon—that did not yet smell of grass, but would smell of grass soon. They walked and walked in silence under the bright, smiling sun. They did not walk, but swam. They did not swim but flew. They flew like birds that sweep in the soft air of the lovely world which the Lord has created for all living things. Hush! They are at the windmill which belongs to the village elder. Once it belonged to Nachman Veribivker. Now it belongs to the village elder, whose name is Opanas—a cunning Gentile with one earring, who owns a "sarnovar." Opanas is a rich epicurean. Along with the mill he has a store—the same store which once belonged to Nachman Veribivker. He took both the mill and the store from the Jew by cunning.

The mill went round in its season, but this day it was still. There was no wind. A curious Passover eve without winds. That the mill was not working was so much the better for Feitel and Fedoka. They could see the mill itself. And there was much to see in the mill. But to them the mill was not so interesting as the sails, and the wheel which turns them whichever way the wind blows. They sat down near the mill, and talked. It was one of those conversations which have no beginning and no end. Feitel

told stories of the town to which his father had once taken him. He was at the fair. He saw shops. Not a single shop as in Veribivka, but a lot of shops. And in the evening his father took him to the Synagogue. His father had *Yahrzeit* after his father. "That means after my grandfather," explained Feitel. "Do you understand, or do you not?"

Fedoka might have understood, but he was not listening. He interrupted with a story that had nothing to do with what Feitel was talking about. He told Feitel that last year he saw a bird's nest in a high tree. He tried to reach it, but could not. He tried to knock it down with a stick, but could not. He threw stones at the nest, until he brought down two tiny bleeding fledglings.

"You killed them?" asked Feitel, fearfully, and made a wry face.

"Little ones," replied Fedoka.

"But they were dead?"

"Without feathers, yellow beaks, little fat bellies."

"But killed, but killed!"

It was rather late when Feitel and Fedoka saw by the sun in the heavens that it was time to go home. Feitel had forgotten that it was the Passover eve. He remembered then that his mother had to wash him, and dress him in his new trousers. He jumped up and flew home, Fedoka after him. They both flew home gladly and joyfully. And in order that one should not be home before the other, they held hands, flying like arrows from bows. When they got to the village, this was the scene which confronted them:—

Nachman Veribivker's house was surrounded by peasants, men and women, boys and girls. The clerk, Kuratchka, and Opanas the village elder and his wife, and the magistrate and the policeman—all were there, talking and shouting together. Nachman and his wife were in the middle of the crowd arguing, and waving their hands. Nachman was bent low and was wiping the perspiration from his face with both hands. By his side stood his older children, gloomy and downcast. Suddenly, the whole picture changed. Some one pointed to the two children. The whole crowd, including the village elder and the magistrate, the policeman and the clerk, stood still, as if petrified. Only Nachman looked at the people, straightened out his back, and laughed. His wife threw out her hands and began to weep.

The village elder and the clerk and the magistrate and their wives pounced on the children.

"Where were you, you so-and-so?"

"Where were we? We were down by the mill."

The two friends, Feitel as well as Fedoka, got punished without knowing why.

Feitel's father flogged him with his cap. "A boy should know." What should a boy know? Out of pity his mother took him from his father's hands. She gave him a few smacks on her own account, and at once washed him and dressed him in his new trousers—the only new garment he had for the Passover. She sighed. Why? Afterwards he heard his father saying to his mother: "May the Lord help us to get over this festival in peace. The Passover ought to have gone before it came." Feitel could not understand why the Passover should have gone before it came. He worried himself about this. He did not understand why his father had flogged him, and his mother smacked him. He did not understand what sort of a Passover eve it was this day in the world.

If Feitel's Jewish brains could not solve the problems, certainly Fedoka's peasant brains could not. First of all his mother took hold of him by his flaxen hair, and pulled it. Then she gave him a few good smacks in the face. These he accepted like a philosopher. He was used to them. And he heard his mother talking with the peasants. They told curious tales of a child that the Jews of the town had enticed on the Passover eve, hidden in a cellar a day and a night, and were about to make away with, when his cries were heard by passers-by. They rescued him. He had marks on his body—four marks, placed like a cross.

A cunning peasant-woman with a red face told this tale. And the other women shook their shawl-covered heads, and crossed themselves. Fedoka could not understand why the women looked at him when they were talking. And what had the tale to do with him and Feitel? Why had his mother pulled his flaxen hair and boxed his ears? He did not care about these. He was used to them. He only wanted to know why he had had such a good share that day.

"Well?" Feitel heard his father remark to his mother immediately after the festival. His face was shining as if the greatest good fortune had befallen him. "Well? You fretted yourself to death. You were afraid. A woman remains a woman. Our Passover and their Easter have gone, and nothing."

"Thank God," replied his mother. And Feitel could not understand what his mother had feared. And why were they glad that the Passover was gone? Would it not have been better if the Passover had been longer and longer?

Feitel met Fedoka outside the door. He could not contain himself, but told him everything—how they had prayed, and how they had eaten. Oh, how they had eaten! He told him how nice all the Passover dishes were, and how sweet the wine. Fedoka listened attentively, and cast his eyes on Feitel's blouse. He was thinking of *matzo*. Suddenly there was a scream, and a cry in a high-pitched soprano:

"Fedoka, Fedoka!"

It was his mother calling him in for supper. But Fedoka did not hurry. He thought she would not pull his hair now. First of all, he had not been at the mill. Secondly, it was after the Passover. After the Passover there was no need to be afraid of the Jews. He stretched himself on the grass, on his stomach, propping up his white head with his hands. Opposite him lay Feitel, his black head propped up by his hands. The sky is blue. The sun is warm. The little wind fans one and plays with one's hair. The little calf stands close by. The cock is also near, with his wives. The two heads, the black and the white, are close together. The children talk and talk and talk, and cannot finish talking.

Nachman Veribivker is not at home. Early in the morning he took his stick, and let himself go over the village, in search of business. He stopped at every farm, bade the Gentiles good morning, calling each one by name, and talked with them on every subject in the world. But he avoided all reference to the Passover incident, and never hinted at his fears of the Passover. Before going away, he said: "Perhaps, friend, you have something you would like to sell?" "Nothing, 'Lachman,' nothing." "Old iron, rags, an old sack, or a hide?" "Do not be offended, 'Lachman,' there is nothing. Bad times!" "Bad

times? You drank everything, maybe. Such a festival!" "Who drank? What drank? Bad times."

The Gentile sighed. Nachman also sighed. They talked of different things. Nachman would not have the other know that he came only on business. He left that Gentile, and went to another, to a third, until he came upon something. He would not return home empty-handed.

Nachman Veribivker, loaded and perspiring, tramped home, thinking only of one problem—how much was he going to gain or lose that day. He has forgotten the Passover eve incident. He has forgotten the fears of the Passover. The clerk, Kuratchka, and his governors and decrees have gone clean out of the Jew's head.

Let winds blow. Let storms rage. Let the world turn upside down. The old oak which has been standing since the creation of the world, and whose roots reach to God-knows-where—what does he care for winds? What are storms to him?

## IT HAD TO BE

By DAVID PINSKI

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

David Pinski, born 1872 in Mohilev, in White Russia; attended Cheder till thirteen, when his parents went to Moscow, where he combined general subjects with Jewish. Afterwards went to Vienna to study medicine, but the expulsion from Moscow ruined his parents, who went to Warsaw, where he became a teacher. Joined the Socialist party, and had his first sketch published, though he had started writing at the age of eleven. Played an active part in the early days of the Jewish Labour Movement, and brought Peretz into it. Conducted with Peretz a group of Jewish students, and helped him to publish educational books in Yiddish. Went to Berlin in 1896, attending lectures at the University. Lived for a time in Switzerland, and was one of the organisers of the meeting of Friends of Yiddish, held in Basle the day after the First Zionist Congress. Contributed to a number of publications in Europe and America. Was invited in 1899 by one of the New York Yiddish papers to settle in New York, and has lived there since. Attended Columbia College, New York. Was attracted by Jewish nationalism, and became a prominent Poale Zionist, and was Editor of the New York Poale Zionist daily "Zeit." One of the first men in modern Yiddish literature, and the first who brought Yiddish literature among the working class. The first Yiddish author to give artistic treatment to the life of the Jewish proletariat, both in his short stories and plays. Some of his plays, notably "The Treasure" (translated into English by Ludwig Lewisohn) have been acclaimed among the outstanding dramas of our time. Has written a series of tales about King Solomon's wives, one tale for each of the thousand wives.

He lived in the south—his wife in the north. It had been like that for years. She and the children lived in the northern town, where he and she were both born, had married and brought five children into the world. He, in a distant southern town, to which the bitter struggle for existence had banished him. It was to have been for a short time. For a few months. But it came to be years.

So they wrote letters. Yearning letters, often stained with tears. And at the end of each the wish that God might soon bring them together again.

A big river flowed past the town in the north, on to the town in the south. Hundreds of miles long. But to them it was a link, something that joined them together. It conveyed a constant greeting.

She could stand on the bridge in the north, look down at the waters flowing away from her, and accompany them with yearning glances, send her heart with them. For they were flowing south.

He could stand on the bridge in the south, watching the waters flowing down, with questioning eyes. For they came from the north.

One summer she wrote to him :

"I bathed yesterday. The waters went over my body and passed on to you in the south. Catch them and bathe in them."

That was a strange letter for a woman of forty to write. Yearning makes ordinary people seers and poets.

She was a pious woman. When she had finished the letter she felt abashed. She blushed and looked round guiltily, lest the walls had seen what she had written.

But the words pleased her. They had come from the depths within her. She looked at them, and lived them over again and again. She felt the contact. She saw the contact.

Great is the distance. The waters that flow out between the banks in the north have many things to tell when they pass between the banks of the south. Ships, big and small, have gone over them. Lovers have rowed their boats on them. People have bathed in them, men, women, children. Some have been drowned, and some have drowned themselves.

Yet the waters that had passed over her, caressed her, kissed her, would reach the distant south untouched, would bring her husband the impress of her nude form.

In her later letters she only hinted shyly :

"I bathed yesterday," or "I am going bathing to-day."

No more. She had created a secret understanding between them, and it buoyed her up.

And he prayed even more ardently and piously at the close of his letters that God in His mercy might reunite them.

He did so with even greater fervour in the letter that he sent

her by the hand of a friend of his. He told her there about the bearer of the letter. A Hebrew teacher, from their own district, near their own town. He had tried his luck in the southern town, but without success. Now he was going back to try his luck in their northern town.

He proceeded to describe him—a great scholar, who ought to ■ more than a teacher. And a very observant Jew, a veritable saint.

He proposed that his friend should live in their house. His room was empty anyhow. The room behind the kitchen. It would be a good thing to have him there. He would be a teacher and an example to the two younger children. Till God took pity on them, and so forth.

His pious moan as he wrote those last lines lay on the words, shrieked, wept, sobbed out of them.

It evoked from her just such another moan. And bitter, scalding tears. That he should have to be far away, and a stranger be the example ■ their children! When would God have compassion on them?

The teacher came to live there. Moved into the room behind the kitchen. A room that was separated from the rest, as if it had nothing to do with any other part of the house. A dwelling on its own.

And besides, she had a grown-up son, in addition to the younger ones, a grown man, who was about to be married. And two grown-up daughters, of marriageable age.

So there was no liability in the stranger—a teacher, and an observant Jew, a veritable saint—occupying the room that stood empty.

Ah, they had forgotten the long winter nights, when the grown-up daughters and the grown-up son would go to their friends or to the theatre, to dances and parties, and the younger boys would be asleep in their room, sleeping the sound sleep of youth.

It happened presently. One long, cold winter night. The older children were not at home. The younger were asleep. The teacher had just come in from the Beth Hamedrash where he had been studying the Gemarah. He had eaten supper and said grace. Was sitting quietly for a while on the couch beside the dining-table in the warm, well-heated dining-room. Exchanged

a few words with her, while she cleared the table. Talked about her husband in the distant southern town. Both spoke with a heavy heart, joylessly.

They talked for only a little while. It soon became quiet. Only the cricket on the hearth did not cease chirping, and from one of the bedrooms came the sound of the heavy breathing of the sleeping boys.

Suddenly they realised that they were alone. Alone with the silence which pressed on them from all sides, and with the cricket and the breathing of the sleeping children. And with their piety. Yet, they both lost themselves. Became uneasy. The heat in the room grew unbearable. Almost as if their only course would be to fling open door and windows and let in the frost. They forgot what they had been saying when they had grown silent. They found no words for restarting a conversation.

She stood at the door of the larger room which they called hall, and which led to her bedroom. She slipped through the door, stole out. Shut it behind her. Even locked the bedroom door behind her. Undressed in a state of trepidation ; crawled under the blankets as if to hide from something.

And he rose up terrified from his place beside the table. Rushed as if he were hunted through the dining-room and the kitchen, into his room. Put all his piety into saying the prayer before going to sleep. Talked down, shouted down something inside him. Was afraid to stop saying his prayers.

Both found it hard to fall asleep.

After that, there were evenings when she begged the grown-up daughters to stay at home, not to go away. Several times she ordered them not to leave the house. It was not proper for girls to be out at night.

The older son was beyond her. It was no use pleading with him to stay or ordering him not to go out.

She did not always succeed with the girls, either. And there were evenings when they had to work late. They were dress-makers, and people got married. Nor could she always beg or ban. The children might ask—"What new thing is this?" Why should they suddenly be told that they should not or must not go out of the house? They might even begin to understand!

Often on such lonesome nights the teacher would put on his poor, worn fur, and leave his warm, well-lit room, with a groan, and

a wry face. And go stumbling through heavy snow, in black night and biting frost. Take refuge in the dark, cold Beth Hamedrash.

But when he stayed at home, an atmosphere of disquiet hung over the house, of heart-beating and looming dread. Though he kept to his room, studying the Gemarah.

One such night, as she lay in bed, restless, distraught, afraid of herself, she remembered that she had left her oldest son's blanket over the stove. She had accidentally upset a jug of water over it, and had put it there to dry. When he came home, he would look for it, get annoyed, and wake her. So she got out of bed, and went to the stove. Walked, wrapped in the heavy folds of the darkness in the rooms. She did not kindle a light, because in the light she would have seen the disquiet and the looming dread.

The teacher had long finished his page of Gemarah, extinguished his lamp, and got into bed; but he was shivering, his teeth chattered in his head. So he decided to get up and go to the stove to warm himself.

At the stove they knocked into each other in the dark. Two almost naked bodies, a man and a woman. Terror. Almost a shriek. Then groping in fear and blackness. The groping became an embrace. The groan of a released, long suppressed longing. And forgetfulness.

After forgetfulness came dread and despair. The next day the teacher left the town. Probably to suffer and expiate his sin. The reason given was that he had been called home by bad news.

But she had to conceal her fear and despair. She would have wept for days, but tears betray. She did not dare to be pale. Did not dare to lose countenance. Lest the older children observe, question, look at her in surprise.

So her face became a mask. When she was alone, she tore her hair, beat her head, tormented herself, fiercely, brutally. But she did not weep. And she met her children with her customary calm.

If only God did not see as her children did not see! She did not cease to speak to God. In her heart, quietly, without moving her lips. That He should forget what He had seen in the darkness that night. That He should forgive. Should not punish her. That it should remain in the dark. She counted the days, and lived in hope.

But when she had counted a certain number of days, a shudder

passed through her body. Her hair seemed on fire at the roots. Day passed into day, and the horror increased.

She tried, in the days that followed, to lift up the heavy commode—several times—it almost killed her. One day she nearly fainted, after a dose of scrambling on to chairs and table and jumping off.

That day the children noticed that she looked ill. Something was wrong. What had happened?

But it was shortly before Passover. So she had her explanation. She had a lot to do. She was fagged.

The children only wondered why she was doing more that pre-Passover time than any other. And the younger daughter incautiously said:

“Father isn’t coming!”

Those words saved her. They gave her an excuse to cry out. She became hysterical. She sobbed for a long time, bitterly. The children thought they had touched her raw wound, and wept with her, helped their mother to bemoan her parting from their father.

After that, they often saw her with tears in her eyes. But they asked no questions. Spoke no word. They were afraid lest they open the wound again.

And when she had counted six months, it was midsummer, and very hot. So she went to bathe.

The river was young in the northern town. Not far from its source. But broad and deep and dangerous. Mainly because it was full of whirlpools, abysses that swallowed people who came near. There were many such whirlpools. Especially near the places where they bathed the horses. And where the best swimmers bathed.

So she went to bathe where the strongest swimmers bathe. For she was an excellent swimmer. She walked into the water slowly. Hands clasped over her abdomen. As if trying to hide it. She walked, listening to what was underfoot, feeling for something with her feet. But she was, all of her, with her husband in the distant south. She breathed heavily, and tears blinded her eyes, rolled down her cheeks, fell like raindrops into the river. And all she was, cried:

“I am going to bathe, my husband!”

Another step, and she felt the ground had vanished under her

feet. Her heart beat rapidly. She was almost turning back. Was on the verge of unclasping her hands, tearing them away from her abdomen, and flinging them out and swimming. She still wanted to speak to her husband, to tell him about the waters that would go over her naked body, and flow on to him. But she pressed her arms more tightly to her abdomen, shut her eyes, took another step, and disappeared. She sank as if she were forced down. As if there were a heavy weight inside her.

## ELLUL

By H. D. NOMBERG

*Translated by HANNAH BERMAN*

Hersh David Nomberg, born 1876, died 1927. Born in Poland, of a long line of Rabbis. His father died young and he was brought up by his grandfather in a strictly religious Hassidic home. Exclusively religious education up to the age of eighteen; a brilliant student. Attracted by modern Hebrew literature, he developed a passion for literature as such, and taught himself Russian, Polish and German to be able to read books in those languages. He was greatly influenced by Peretz, who advised him to write in Yiddish, the language of the masses. Earned his living as a teacher in a Hebrew school in Warsaw. Shalom Ash and Abraham Reisen came to Warsaw soon after, and they formed the triad that was the "new school" in Yiddish literature. Published his first tale in 1900. One of the founders of the Yiddishist and Folkist movements, and the creator of the terms by which these movements are known. One of the initiators and leaders of the Yiddish cultural movement, in whose interests he travelled extensively, to America, Argentine, and other countries. An outstanding publicist. Published hundreds of feuilletons, essays and short stories. His play, "The Family," became part of the repertoire of the famous Vilna Troupe. Translated into Yiddish "Romeo and Juliet," and works by Tagore, Hauptmann and others.

### I

TIME goes by unceasingly; and the days fly and vanish, one after the other, one after the other. . . . No sooner had the Jews finished counting the *Omer*, celebrated the Feast of Weeks, than the solemn days began—the "Three Weeks," the "Nine Days." And before they had time to turn round, the month of Ellul was upon them. The days grow shorter and shorter; cold winds blow; a dark mist enshrouds the earth in the morning and in the evening. A shudder passes over everybody when the ram's horn is sounded. Wherever you go and wherever you stand, you hear sighing. One somehow imagines that the whole world is bowed down with the great anxiety that is at its heart, and sighs and shivers. . . .

Thirteen-year-old Solomon goes about abstracted, anxious, full of gloomy forebodings. His big head never rested upright on his shoulders. Now he ■ bowed down more than ever, walks along slouchingly. His eyes are wandering; his coat is not buttoned up; his cap is twisted all on one side. He neither answers a question straight, nor talks sensibly.

More frequently now he hears at home the abuse and curses to which he has long been accustomed :

"Just look at him!" his mother cries when he comes home from school. "Doesn't know a thing! I needed that on top of all my troubles!"

The monologue has long been familiar to Solomon. He knows it almost off by heart; and the only feeling he has when he hears it is a realisation of its fatuity and its tedium. He walks across the room, from the table to the cupboard, and picks up several things as familiar to him as his mother's monologue. He makes a pretence of looking at them again, just not to hear his mother's voice. He knows in advance that she will stop at last, and begin ■ complain of her headache. . . .

Then his father comes home, and starts questioning Solomon, where he has been that day, where he has prayed, whom he has talked to, whom he has walked with. Solomon answers untruthfully, one lie bigger than the other. And he feels a sort of satisfaction at being able to fool them all so nicely. No one can fool him. Oh, no! No one can catch him out telling a lie!

The school just drove him distracted. Solomon was a brainy boy. Everybody knew that he was a "genius." And yet no one ever praised him, and said: "Solomon, you're a good boy. You're a clever boy. You're a brilliant scholar." On the contrary, everyone had some complaint to make against him—they said that he did not want to learn anything. . . . The point was that he already knew the Portion of the Law for the following Sabbath on the previous Sunday. And so he had nothing to do the whole week. He sat staring at the hands of the clock which moved so slowly. And when the sun was shining, he watched its bright beams moving from one book to the other, from one boy to the other. Quite often he left the school without asking permission of the teacher. The teacher and all the students were already used to this, after what had happened ■ the beginning of the summer.

Solomon stayed on at school, not because it was necessary for him to continue under that teacher. (He knew this very well.) But because the teacher had begged his father to let him stay. Yechial, the teacher, obtained new pupils because of Solomon. And Solomon was always wanting to show off before the school.

"I can go out as many times as I like," he boasted to a boy.

"Can you go out three times? The teacher won't let you," the other answered.

"Yes, I can. I'll show you."

"But you won't be able to do it four times."

"I'll go out five times. I'll go out five times to-day. You'll see!" retorted Solomon.

His eyes blazed; and the smile of irony and resolution appeared which always played about his thick lips when he was stubbornly determined to do a thing.

This was on a Monday, when the boys were being taught the Portion of the Law for the following Sabbath. The teacher was preoccupied, turning over the pages of the *Gemarrah*, rushing from the *Maharasha* to the *Gemarrah*, and back again, from the *Gemarrah* to the *Maharasha*. Solomon left his seat, stood before the teacher with an innocent face, and asked permission to go out. He did this three times—went out and came back. When he tried it the fourth time, the teacher jumped up in a rage, and shouted:

"What's the matter with you, rushing about like mad to-day? Are you sick, or what the devil is the matter with you?"

"But, teacher, I already know the lesson," answered Solomon. He dropped his eyes, and scratched his head.

"Boaster that you are!" cried the teacher. "Go back to your place."

But Solomon was persistent. This was one of the occasions when he felt that his young strength had been liberated from a heavy burden. His melancholy mood was gone completely. At such times he felt as though a stream of new life was coursing through him.

"I know the Portion off by heart. If you like, teacher, examine me," he pleaded.

The teacher gave in; and Solomon began to recite the Portion in a mood of elation, inspired. He waved his hands about. The teacher listened. The other scholars never took their eyes off

him, not even when the teacher's wife appeared in the doorway, listening. But, in the middle, Solomon remembered that he had to go out once more. He broke off, and said :

" I want to go out."

And he went.

Since that day, a curious relationship grew up between teacher and pupil. The teacher let him do whatever he wished ; but his glances when they fell on Solomon were full of secret fury. And not only the teacher, but also Solomon's schoolfellows looked upon him with secret enmity. No one made friends with him.

In the long hours which dragged so tediously and gloomily, like an autumn evening to one who stands sentinel, oppressive thoughts used to fill the brain of the boy—thoughts which harassed and fretted his young soul. He knew, he never forgot it, that he had been created only to serve the Almighty ; that the Holy Law—the same Holy Law that he did not want to study—was full of injunctions, behests, moral lessons, admonitions ; and that he, Solomon, was not walking in the path of righteousness.

And often when such thoughts tormented him excessively, when he saw rising in front of him all the sins he had of late committed, after he had resolved to do penance—when he remembered how he had stolen money in his father's house, told lies, and omitted to say the afternoon prayer—when such thoughts oppressed him, he left the school, climbed over the paling, tucked away the tails of his coat, and ran off at full speed across the meadow which led down to the river. His quick trot, the movements of his body ; the soft little breeze which blew into his ears, and fanned his cheeks ; the little trees which danced quickly past him—all these refreshed him, drove the painful thoughts out of his head, and almost put a new soul into him.

" Hurrah ! " he shouted, and flung himself on the ground.

He had but one friend among all the schoolboys. His name was David. He was a frail, sickly boy, always catching cold, always coughing ; and because of this, he always had his throat muffled with a red handkerchief. This same handkerchief, one tail of which persisted in coming out of his collar at all times, gave him a charming appearance, as also did the sickly flush on his cheeks. He had large blue eyes, with dark rims around them, pale lips, and spindly little hands and feet. He talked in a

quavering voice, so that one imagined a sickly little bird was twittering.

"Come, we will go out," Solomon whispered to him in the middle of the lesson.

"The teacher won't let us," said David.

"Yes, he will. Go and ask him, fool. . . ."

David went out, and Solomon followed.

"Climb up on to the paling!" commanded Solomon.

David stayed where he was, gazed with wide eyes at the paling, and was afraid to venture.

"No," he pleaded. "Let us go back to school."

"Here is a five-kopek piece for you. Buy some cakes for yourself at Yechonan's shop," Solomon coaxed him.

The coin worked the trick. David climbed over the paling, dropped down on the other side, and began to cough.

"Race me," Solomon ordered.

David was exhausted now, and coughed without ceasing. They both sat down on the grass to talk.

"You know," said Solomon, "I have committed a lot, a lot of sins. But I am not confirmed. What harm does it do me if I have sins? They are not counted to me yet. Isn't that true?"

"True," responded David.

"I have a lot of sins," Solomon went on. "Oh, such a big mountain of sins."

David pondered; then he said:

"I have more than you."

"No, I have more."

And the boys began to brag to each other about their sins. Solomon's imagination ran riot, and he invented such difficult sins that David was utterly routed.

"Why do you cough so much?" Solomon asked. "You know that you may die—God forbid!"

That made David sulky, and he wanted to be off.

"No, David. I swear to you by my life that I was not cursing you. I was only just saying. Here is another five-kopek piece for you. The last. Here! Take it." And he thrust the coin into David's hand.

There was one other person in the whole world whom Solomon respected and liked. This was his grandmother—his mother's mother, who lived in their house. She was a calm, good-natured,

silent woman. Solomon believed that there were only two clever people in his home : he himself and his grandmother. One might think that she knew nothing. His mother was always in a temper, inclined to sulk, and to be abusive just for the sake of abusing. She would fry the cutlets herself, and afterwards abuse the servant because they were spoiled. She was always searching for her keys in odd corners, turning the house upside down, shouting and kicking up a row, only to remember later on that she herself had put them away. "Father isn't at all clever," Solomon would say to himself. "I can fool him ten times a day." But it was altogether different with the grandmother. One might be led to think that she knew nothing, and cared about nothing. She sat at the window knitting a stocking, knitting and knitting ; yet she saw everything. When father sometimes forgot to lock the money-drawer, she stared silently at Solomon ; and he felt instantly that she had read his thoughts. Without a word, she walked over to the drawer, locked it, and took charge of the key.

One Sabbath day Solomon got to know where the key was. And when everyone had gone out of the house, he opened the drawer, and began rummaging among the coins. Who would have imagined that he would commit such a sin ? Yet the grandmother was suspicious of him. She suddenly came into the house. Solomon was frightened, and did not know what to do. The grandmother deliberately turned away, giving him an opportunity to get away. She locked the drawer, and never said a word to anyone, not even to him. "And this," said Solomon to himself, "is what I like. She knows me ; and I know her ; and—that's all !" And he felt grateful to the old woman who did not hate him, although he was such a sinner, although he was so degraded a being. . . .



Solomon would be thirteen in the month of Ellul. And the only comfort he had had in his life of sin would be gone from him. He would be confirmed in a few days, after which his sins would be counted against himself, up in heaven. And as soon as Ellul began, and the sound of the ram's horn was heard, Solomon became dejected, and his heart began to be greatly troubled. Terror seized hold of him, when he remembered that from the

day he was confirmed, all his excuses would be vain, and his sins would be real sins, as it is with all adult Jews.

How would he be able to resist the Great Tempter who was so strong, had so much power over him? When the Tempter urged him to do a thing, he was unable to withstand him. Father of the Universe, what was going to happen?

These thoughts never left him day or night, from the moment when the creaking of a door woke him up at dawn. From the first day of Ellul his father devoted himself utterly to the worship of God, and he got up every day at dawn to study the Zohar. Solomon was awakened out of his dreams which held sway in a little corner of his brain like a mist that melts away and vanishes. He turned over on the other side. He was reluctant to get up and serve God. Sleepily he realised how weak he was to do battle against his physical desires. The room grew bright, although the blackness of night still rested on the window. Somehow he imagined that out of doors the trees were tossing in fear and dread. His father had already started to read out of the Zohar. His pious voice penetrated deep, deep into his soul. His father's melancholy sing-song drone seemed to be moving farther and farther away, until it almost did not belong to this world at all. . . . The boy was again fast asleep.

When his father shook him, shouted at him, he awoke. And no sooner did he open his eyes, than his father began to lecture him :

"How long is this going on? You are almost confirmed. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

It was misty out of doors. The sun had not yet completely driven away the mists. Through the window, Solomon could see the tree; one side was covered in mist, while on the other side, the beams of the fresh sun were already playing. He felt pleasantly warm under the bedclothes. The warmth went through every limb of his body. . . . He was tempted to stay in bed a little longer, but his father insisted, and he got up.

The long-drawn-out day began, the boredom of the school.

In the afternoon, on his way from the school to the synagogue, he took a stroll to the market square, where he walked about for some time. At that hour, when the sun was beginning to set, the market-square took on an altogether different appearance. Solomon loved to gaze at the church tower and the clock which

glistened as though covered with gold. The tailors' apprentices were going home from work, whistling their queer little tunes. Servant girls were carrying water from the pump. The apprentices got in their way. The darkness increased. The last rays of the sun vanished. A mist was spreading over the distant fields. In the west, the sky was sickly red, terribly anxious-looking. Darkness fell. A black smoke rolled down from the baker's roof into the market square. Pigeons strutted about, bending their little heads to peck at a grain of something. And when one approached them, they instantly spread out their wings and disappeared in the smoke and the darkness. Profound grief fretted the heart. It terrified one to look at the sky. . . . Reddish clouds dragged themselves slowly along. . . . In the west, a star had already begun to shine, to glitter tremblingly. . . .

"I have again forgotten to say the afternoon prayer," Solomon suddenly reminded himself. "What is going to happen?"

A multitude of thoughts crowded on him all at once: Should he go to the synagogue and pray devoutly, turn back to God? But he wanted to see David. He recalled the stifling air of the little house in which David lived, poor and necessitous. It was terrible to see the bedclothes, which were filthy. Solomon remembered all this, and went off to the orchard, to Samuel-Bear, the treasurer of the House of Learning, who was to be found at the orchard day and night.

Samuel-Bear was a young man of about thirty, a poor man, with six little children. He was neither a profound scholar nor among the first of the Pietists; but he loved learning, and was ready to give his all for a man of learning. He was a very respectful man, and also very hospitable. He was always in a state of enthusiasm; either he extolled the judge of the congregation for his scholarliness, or told of the marvels of the saintly Rabbi Meyer.

At the last Festival of the Rejoicing in the Law, he grew so excited while moving in the processions, leaped so high that he let the Scroll of the Law drop out of his arms on to the floor. There was a terrible commotion in the synagogue. The whole congregation was thunderstruck, as though an earthquake had suddenly turned the world upside down. Soon after the festival, Samuel-Bear went off to the Rabbi to ask his advice, what he should do. He wept and sobbed; but the Rabbi did not reassure him in any way. In the village, people whispered that Samuel-

Bear would die that year. They regarded him with profound pity, as though he had actually been sentenced to death. He himself lost his head completely. He did not sleep for nights. Day succeeded day. The year was drawing to an end, and Samuel-Bear was terror-stricken. He felt that at any moment death would come upon him. He could not rest at home, and rented an orchard where he spent all his time, and where he also slept. Boys and men often came to him. He invited them, so that he might talk to them, and rid himself of the terror which was in his heart.

When Solomon entered the orchard, darkness had already fallen. A breeze rustled among the branches. The whole orchard was murmuring softly. A light shone out of the hut in which Samuel-Bear was sitting, all alone, buried in thought, an open book in front of him. He looked very sad and depressed, and was obviously pleased that Solomon had come to him. He got up, took an apple out of a basket, and handed it to Solomon.

"Here is an apple. Take it. A good apple, I tell you, an excellent apple—a very, very fine apple. Don't be shy. Why should a boy like you be shy?"

Solomon took the apple, and bit into it.

"And a blessing? What about a blessing? Did you say a blessing?"

"Said it," Solomon answered.

"Why didn't you say it out loud, so that I might respond with an 'Amen'? Why must one tell you such things? Yes, oh, yes! Such a clever brain, and will not learn. Why not? If I had such a good head for learning, I would keep bending over the *Gemarrah* day and night."

"What do they want of me?" Solomon asked himself with irritation. "Who cares about the clever brain?"

He was annoyed with Samuel-Bear and decided that he really would die before that year was out.

A flash of lightning pierced the darkness. The trees were visible for a moment. From the distance came the rumbling of thunder.

Samuel-Bear was frightened.

"There will be a downpour of rain. Do you know, Solomon? Thunder! . . . Oh, oh!" he sighed.

"A fine night!" muttered Solomon, and was about to go home.

"No. Stay here. Wait!" Samuel-Bear detained him.  
"There ■ no one here. Wait. . . ."

Solomon stayed.

The thunder drew nearer, the claps grew louder ; the lightning flashed brighter. The whole orchard was rumbling. Drops of rain began falling from the black sky. Solomon stood in the little doorway of the hut, in the open, and could see Samuel-Bear at the table, his lips moving, as he beat his breast with his hand.

"He ■ saying the last prayer of the dying," Solomon told himself, pitying Samuel-Bear.

Solomon felt miserable standing there ; but the rain was now coming down in torrents, and he was compelled to wait. The sky was rent, the thunder growled. The earth trembled. . . . Suddenly a brilliant flash passed quite near ; and immediately after the thunder crashed with exceptional loudness. Solomon was frightened ; and Samuel-Bear got up from his place, covered his eyes with his hand, and shouted with all his might :

"Hear, O Israel : the Lord our God, the Lord is One. . . ."

It was as though he wanted to out-roar the thunder ; for he dragged out the "One," until the thunder-clap was spent.

It was a night of terror for Solomon. He got home late. He told his father a pack of lies—that he had been to the House of Learning. And he had also omitted to say the evening prayer. Bad dreams tormented him in his sleep.

### III

Something unexpected happened which threw Solomon into profound melancholy.

The grandmother fell ill, and took to her bed. She did not sigh, and she did not complain of any pain. But Solomon felt in the very atmosphere of the house, in the looks of his father and mother, and especially in the yellowness in the face of the sick woman that something terrible was about to happen. He saw the Angel of Death standing by her pillow, holding in his hand his glittering sword with its poisoned point, watching and waiting.

The party that his parents were to have given to celebrate Solomon's confirmation was postponed. This day was to Solomon the boundary marking off two worlds ; and he was frightened. "Father of the Universe !" he sighed, "supposing

I am not able to resist the evil Tempter in the future, will everything be as it has been ? ”

Meanwhile, the day passed like all other days. The sun rose and shone ; later on, the sky was misty, overcast with clouds. And that was all. Folks prayed and ate, and again prayed, and once more ate. Solomon's parents were busy around the sick woman, and forgot completely about his confirmation. They did not lecture him, nor did they throw a single angry word at him. So he pretended to himself that he, too, had forgotten. True, he had committed no sins that day ; but neither had he performed any righteous acts. He had not become different, nor acquired a new heart. . . .

He did not go to school. He had told the teacher that his grandmother was ill. It was a good excuse. The teacher himself was relieved to be rid for a whole day of his sullen, degraded pupil, who only caused him uneasiness. Solomon had already been to the synagogue. He was tramping up and down the meadow, and was bored beyond endurance.

Impatiently he waited for the day to come to an end, so that he might see his friend David. He waited for him at the school, when the children were going home, and brightened up when he caught sight of him.

“ Do you know, David, that it is my confirmation to-day ? ” he asked.

“ Why didn't you have a party ? ” asked David.

“ My grandmother is ill. She has such a yellow face. She will die, she will certainly die,” Solomon whispered to his friend.

“ You mustn't talk like that. You are committing a sin. . . .”

“ No ! ” protested Solomon. “ I am not committing a sin . . . I know.”

After the evening prayer at the synagogue, the two boys walked about the market-place. A cold wind was blowing. David was shivering.

“ I will go home. I am cold,” he said. But Solomon would not let him.

“ No, come. Let us keep on walking. Look, I am pleading with you, and you refuse. . . .”

But David really was cold. Fever burned in his cheeks, and he longed to rest with his head lowered on the table, as he was in the habit of doing at school.

"I am cold," he stammered. "I will go home."

"Don't go, don't go. I will give you ten kopeks . . ."

David stretched out his hand.

"I will give it to you to-morrow."

"I don't want it to-morrow," David persisted stubbornly.

"Well, come with me. I will give it to you."

The boys walked to the house of Solomon's parents.

"Wait here," said Solomon. "I shall be back soon. You shall have the ten kopeks. But don't run away. Promise me."

David gave him his hand, and Solomon went into the house.

He came upon his mother in the kitchen. She flew at him in a rage :

"Runs about like a demon. His grandmother lies ill, and he bangs the door. Why don't you go and recite psalms for her ? Where have you been ? The devil drags him about."

Solomon went into the next room on tip-toe. The sick woman was lying there. Her eyes were closed. In that one day her face had altered terribly. Her chin seemed to have shrunk, grown sharp. Her breathing was heavy and irregular. Solomon went over to the corner in which the clothes were hung up. He found his grandmother's dress, and began shaking it in his hand. Immediately he heard the rattle of money. He swiftly put his hand into the pocket, removed several coins, and hid them.

His quick steps, as he was hurrying to get back to David, woke up the old woman. She opened her eyes, and called him in a feeble voice :

"Solomon !"

He was hurrying to his friend, and pretended that he had not heard ; but the old woman called again :

"Solomon, come here ! Solomon !"

He went over to the bed, and stood there, impatient, his eyes lowered.

"To-day is your confirmation day, Solomon ! It's my fault that you haven't a party. Forgive me, dear child."

It was difficult for her to talk. She sighed, and then, straining herself to the utmost, she added :

"I have no strength. . . . I am ill, Solomon. May the Almighty send me recovery. Pray to God for me, Solomon."

The moment the old woman had ceased speaking, and her

eyelids had again dropped over her eyes, Solomon flew quickly out of the house, to his friend.

"Here, here you are . . . A lot of money . . . Count it," he cried in a tremulous voice.

David took the money in his shivering hands. His teeth were chattering.

"Cold!" he mumbled.

"Well, go home," Solomon waved his hand.

"And the money?"

"Take it. What do I care. . . ?"

When his friend was gone, was lost in the darkness, Solomon found himself alone, all by himself with the new sin he had just committed—the sin which would be entered in heaven to his own account. He lifted up his eyes to the black sky. No star was to be seen; only the moon sent forth a reflection of light from out of the clouds. He crossed the market square, went down a side street, and left the village. He found himself close to the barracks. Here, he recollected suddenly, in the hot days, between noon and night, there used to be crowds of soldiers. They sang very curious songs in firm, bold voices, that were as strong as their shoulders and their faces. The echoes used to accompany them from across the way. Those days had been different, and the sky had been different. So soon as the sun went down, it grew cool; and the nights were so pleasant, so fine. . . . And Solomon began to grieve because time was passing and the days were growing short, and the nights were growing cold and terrifying. . . .

Day succeeds day, and every man must die, and he, Solomon, was already confirmed; and he was a transgressor, a sinner in Israel—a thief.

The moon came out from behind the clouds; for a while it was bright. The barracks could be seen, and it looked as though people were moving about. . . . But soon a shadow spread out, and covered up everything.

That same night, Solomon heard terrible cries in his sleep. He imagined, in his dream, that the whole world had caught fire, and was burning, and all the people were trying to save themselves, running about, but not knowing where to go. . . . He woke up out of his sleep, and recognised his mother's voice from an intermingling of voices. Through the door, he saw candles

burning, and a crowd of people, all moving about slowly. . . . Then, he heard men's voices reading from the book of prayers for those who have passed over from the living. A brief silence followed.

Solomon wrapped himself up in the quilt, and began beating his breast :

"We have betrayed ; we have destroyed ; we have plundered. . . ."

He fell asleep in the middle of saying the prayer.

When he woke again, the old woman was already lying on the floor, covered over with a cloth. There were many women in the house, come to make the grave-clothes. It was late. He set out for the synagogue, resolved to pray earnestly ; but on the road he was tempted to go off to the meadow. Waving everything away from him with his hand, he said to himself :

"It is all one ! In any case, I shall suffer in hell. . . . All is lost. . . ."

When he got to the meadow, he tucked in the tails of his coat, and started to run at full speed, until he was exhausted, and had to fling himself down on the ground.

## THE RICH POOR MAN

By ABRAHAM REISEN

*Translated by HANNAH BERMAN*

Abraham Reisen, born in 1876, in the province of Minsk, in White Russia. One of the most popular Yiddish writers and poets. Many of his poems are so popular that they are veritable folk songs. His father, who was an author in Yiddish and Hebrew—his brother, Zalman Reisen, is a famous Yiddish journalist and one of the heads of the Yiddish Scientific Institute in Vilna, and his sister, Sarah, is a well-known Yiddish authoress, who has also translated "Robinson Crusoe" into Yiddish—taught him Hebrew, Russian and German. Attended Chedar and the general school till fourteen. Started writing poems at the age of eight or nine. Peretz published his first poem in one of his periodicals in 1891 and continued to publish others till 1895, when Reisen was conscripted into the Russian Army. He continued writing poems in the barracks, and read much European literature, particularly Dostoevsky, Knut Hamsun, Heine and Tchechov. When he left the Army at twenty-five, he settled in Warsaw and devoted himself entirely to literature, working in association with Peretz, Aah, and Nomborg. Entered the Jewish Socialist movement in 1900, and many of his songs written then were adopted by the Jewish Labour movement. Left Russia in 1904 and lived for some years in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, and London, publishing various Yiddish literary reviews. Went to America in 1908 and with intervals has lived there since. Has published hundreds of short stories and sketches, marked by a simple, quiet style. His fiftieth birthday in 1926 was the occasion of a remarkable manifestation in New York, over six thousand people packing the Mecca Temple in his honour. He made a triumphal tour through eastern Europe, including Russia. Two Jewish agricultural colonies in Russia are named after him, and there are Abraham Reisen Yiddish schools in America, Argentine, and other countries.

REB YOSSE-BARR's great wish for some years now is to become a poor man, like all the other poor Jews in the town.

"Father of the Universe!" he would mutter to himself. "When shall I stop deceiving myself and the world! . . . Surely, this concealment is enough to make one burst!"

"And what is the use of concealment?" he would say to

himself. "Doesn't everybody know that Yosse-Bear ■ a broken man, who has come down in the world—who can scarcely manage to keep going?"

Yosse-Baer has more than once determined to get rid of all his pride left from the good times of long ago, and to start to live like all poor men do. Only then would he find life tolerable again.

What is the use of trying to hide his poverty, when poverty refuses to be hidden; since it proclaims itself in the very hat he wears both on weekdays and Sabbaths, and in his black, perpetual holiday frockcoat. And even when he puts on in winter his beautiful, sable-lined great-coat—that has remained from the good old times, it seems to hang on him as if it were a stranger—a garment that he had borrowed somewhere, and would have to return to-day or to-morrow. . . .

He has to be as careful of his poverty as if ■ were something he has stolen. He has to smile often; but his smile is not what it used to be. It lacks the charm of the good old times. It is the kind of smile after which the face immediately becomes overclouded, and the eyes take on an expression of perplexity. And when he sighs, as respectable Jews do, the sigh is not at all like what it used to be. It completely lacks the old candour and generosity. It is a sigh such as makes one want to wring one's hands, and cry aloud: "Alas, what has happened to me! . . ."

And he has to be always on his guard. He feels as though someone had bound him, and would not let him stretch his limbs, would not even let him cry out:

"Friends, I am ruined; I am poor now. I am a pauper; leave me alone! . . ."

He feels that a mountain-load would roll off him, if he could only say this; he would be like born anew.

Since he is no longer a genuinely rich man, he would, at least, be a genuine pauper! . . .

But it is not easy for Reb Yosse-Baer to behave like a pauper. He has no idea how to set about it. . . . True, he has not had any new clothes made for ever so long; but then, the garments he has left from his good old days are so many and so strong (real old stuff!) and so spotlessly clean that, whatever garment he puts on, he still looks a man of substance in it, a respectable man, a charitable man. . . . Sometimes, out of sheer spite, he puts on his very oldest clothes, but his beard still proclaims him a wealthy man, his

eyes are those of a rich man. Even his wrinkles are not just ordinary wrinkles. No poor Jew in the town has such wrinkles. His wrinkles suit his face ! . . . And even his hair, which has turned grey with worry, does not look like other premature grey hair—it is pure silver. One might almost go and pawn it ! . . .

And his wife, Esther-Beila, though her pearls have long been pawned—and she wears about her neck a cheap, black ribbon, it suits her better than pearls. When she winds a cheap 'kerchief about her head, everybody thinks the 'kerchief is silk. If she buys material for a frock at a couple of pence a yard, to make it up herself in secret—when she comes into synagogue wearing the frock, people wish her well to wear it. And calculate that it must have cost ever so many roubles. . . . The fact is that no matter what she wears, she always looks a lady. She is tall and amply-built. Her eyes are like two diamonds, glowing with pride, assurance, and charm.

And even the meals at their house ! They have the same fare as all poor Jews do, but, instead of buying one salt herring, Esther-Beila buys a whole pound of herrings at once, and pickles them. It doesn't cost any more. But the herrings are pickled in a glass jar. And none of the poor women would ever dream of pampering herself so much.

" Believe me, they cost no more ! . . . " Esther-Beila said to a neighbour, with a good-humoured smile, when she caught her looking at the jar of pickled herrings.

" Yes . . . " grumbled the neighbour, enviously. " We cannot afford such things. . . . "

And they eat at table like wealthy people do. Knives and forks and a bottle of water. . . . Bread ready sliced in a wicker bread-platter. The big table in the dining-room is decked with a snow-white cloth ; the two youngest children, still at home, unmarried, brother and sister, sit at table in well-bred style, exchanging friendly chaff. Esther-Beila has long ago given up keeping a Jewish servant-girl ; now she keeps a little Gentile girl, who happens to look like a Jewess, and talks Yiddish quite well, and even knows all the laws relating to the kitchen. . . .

Yosse-Baer has repeatedly tried to impress upon his wife that he ■ too poor to keep even that little Gentile girl. . . .

" Why do you keep her ? . . . We can't afford it . . . " he would say to his wife.

Esther-Beila smiles, and replies good-humouredly :

"What does she cost us ? Not worth talking about. The help she gives me in the house enables me to economise on other things. You will be no richer if you send her away."

"I don't want to be rich. I want to be a pauper," Yosse-Baer answers with a smile. . . .

"But you are that already ! " Esther-Beila laughs merrily.

"No, I am not. . . . I can't be until the world realises it ; I've had enough of hiding my poverty, and pretending. . . . It harasses me. Do you understand ? And it costs extra money. . . . If people realised that I am a pauper, it would save me a lot."

"What, for example ? " asks Esther-Beila.

"Well . . . giving charity. . . . Paying for being called up to read a portion of the Law on Sabbaths and festivals . . . giving to various charities. Marrying off a poor bride. . . . Folks come to me about everything, just as they used to do. . . ."

"Then don't give," says Esther-Beila.

"I can't do that. . . . We must adjust our style of living. . . ."

Meanwhile, the little Gentile girl has brought the dessert on a beautifully-carved china dish.

"Dessert again. . . ." cries Yosse-Baer angrily.

"But it costs next to nothing. . . . It's only a couple of apples and a little sugar. . . ."

"But if you ask anyone, they will say that I am a rich man. I have dessert served up at table. . . ."

"Who tells you to call it dessert ? "

"What else am I to call it ? " Yosse-Baer retorts angrily.

"Call it stewed apples," laughs Esther-Beila. But Yosse-Baer is in a temper, and mutters :

"Why must we have dessert ? "

The rest of that year they manage to live somehow, and Yosse-Baer has not yet informed the world of his impoverished condition. But when Passover is only a couple of weeks off, he literally jumps out of his skin ! This year he is going to reveal the truth about himself, confess everything. . . . And he tells Esther-Beila of his resolve :

"Esther-Beila ! I am not going to contribute this year to the Passover Fund for the poor. I have nothing for the Fund ! Nothing for the Passover Fund ! "

"Am I telling you to contribute?" Esther-Beila concurs with him.

"I won't contribute!" Yosse-Baer bangs his fist on the table. "I have nothing left to give, and nothing left to pawn. . . . When they come to me, I shall tell them: 'I can't give you anything. I haven't anything to give you. . . . You give me something for Passover instead! I haven't any money myself to provide for Passover! . . .'"

"Well, well, you will not say that. . . ." Esther-Beila smiles sadly, wiping her eyes with her handkerchief.

"Esther-Beila! I will say it. . . I certainly shall say ■! Surely there must be a limit to everything! How long can one keep smothering it inside one! . . . I certainly shall say to them: 'Friends, you give me something this time to enable me to provide for my Passover. . . I haven't anything myself for Passover. . .'"

But it is merely talk. . . . Even if Yosse-Baer knew that he would have to eat leavened bread on the Passover because he couldn't afford to buy matzoth, he would refuse to take anything from the Passover Fund. But he did make up his mind not to contribute anything to the Fund this year. To begin with, he wants people to know that he can't afford to give anything to the Passover Fund; as for taking something from the Fund himself—there is still time for that. . . . There will be plenty of Passovers coming. . . . He would take the first step towards disclosing his true position by refusing to donate to the Funds; after that, the rest would be easy. . . .

One evening, a week before Passover, Yosse-Baer wraps his sable-lined coat in a snow-white sheet, hands it to the little Gentile girl, and says to her: "Come with me!"

He goes off to Chaim, the moneylender, a very discreet Jew. If one brings him a pledge, he tells nobody about it, unless one fails to redeem it, and then he is forced to sell it. . . . Yosse-Baer takes fifteen roubles for the sable coat. He immediately pays back three roubles by way of interest, and returns home with twelve roubles. . . .

He feels more cheerful now. He doesn't contemplate now asking for charity this Passover, nor next Passover either. . . . He feels confident that he will find his way out of his difficulties somehow without public assistance. . . . He has plenty of good clothes left, and some silverware as well. . . . But he isn't going to

give anything away. He is going to say : " Friends, I can't do it ! "

Next day, two leading residents come to see him. Yosse-Baer has only a five-rouble note left in his pocket out of the twelve roubles, but he receives his visitors with a kindly smile, and says to them very hospitably :

" Sit down. Take a seat ! "

But they have no time to sit down. It is the eve of Passover, and there are a great many poor folks, so they get to business at once.

" We have come, Reb Yosse-Baer, to ask for a donation towards the Passover Fund ! "

" Of course ! Of course ! " says Yosse-Baer, quite happily. " I understand, you have come about the Passover Fund. "

" Where else can we go, " one of them says with a smile. " You are one of the first. . . . "

It seems to Yosse-Baer as if the man is laughing at him. His face grows crimson ; his head grows hot ; and he mutters :

" Of course, of course. . . . You come to me first. . . . Of course ! That means that I must give you something for the Fund. . . . Can you change a note for me ? . . . "

" A hundred-rouble note ? " asks one of the men innocently.

" If it's a hundred-rouble note, we haven't enough change yet. . . . "

" No, " stammers Yosse-Baer. " It isn't a hundred-rouble note. It's less. . . . "

" Fifty ? " asks the second man, innocently.

" Not as much . . . " mumbles Yosse-Baer in confusion, and takes the five-rouble note out of his purse.

" A five-rouble note. . . . Of course, you don't want any change, " says one of the men. " You have only been having a joke with us. We really need the whole five roubles. We have a lot of poor people this year who are in need of matzoth, wine, potatoes. "

Yosse-Baer gets more confused than ever. He looks round wildly for help, as if he has been set upon by two robbers. . . . But there is nobody else in the room. . . . So he thrusts the five-rouble note into the hand of one of the men, muttering :

" All right ! Have it all ! "

" Fine ! Fine ! " says one of the men, praising him.

"A fine donation, Reb Yosse-Baer! The Almighty will reward you!" says the other, blessing him.

Not till the two visitors have gone, kissing the "doorpost" as they passed it, does Yosse-Baer realise what he has done. . . . He runs up and down the room, greatly agitated, and in his agitation, plucks at the silvery threads of his beard, and groans:

"Woe is me! What have I done! . . . How shall we manage now to get what we need for Passover? . . ."

Esther-Beila comes in.

"Esther-Beila," he mutters, "they have ruined me."

"Who?" cries Esther-Beila, fixing her eyes on her husband.

"The two committee-men of the Passover Fund. They have wheedled the whole five-rouble note out of me."

But Esther-Beila has expected that this would happen. It is the usual thing. So she smiles a wry smile:

"Well, what can you do now? We shall have to pawn the gold wine-goblet. . . . It is a shame to face the moneylender again. . . ."

And when dusk falls, after the evening prayer, Yosse-Baer puts on his coat, and makes his way again, through little back-streets, to the moneylender. . . .

The moneylender knows that goblet well of old. But he makes a pretence of examining it again. He offers five roubles, and immediately deducts one rouble as interest.

When Yosse-Baer returns home with his four roubles, he starts pleading with Esther-Beila:

"Please don't buy expensive food. . . . Make your Passover purchases as cheaply as you can. . . . I am not ashamed. I want the whole world to know that I am a pauper. . . ."

Esther-Beila shakes her head and smiles a sorrowful but well-to-do sort of smile.

And Yosse-Baer plucks at the silvery threads of his beard, and groans:

"Oh dear, how can I make them understand that I have nothing, that I can do nothing? . . . How shall I ever live to see the time when I shall myself accept charity to enable me to provide for the Passover? . . . The time must come. . . . What is the use of fooling around with Chaim, the moneylender, pledging the sable coat, and redeeming the sable coat, pledging the wine goblet, and redeeming it again? . . . It's a silly game! . . ."

But when Passover arrives, and Yosse-Baer is sitting in his pew

in the synagogue—the best pew, right against the eastern wall, wearing his fine clothes, he soon forgets himself again. The beadle has just started to auction the Portions of the Law. The bids are high. A twelve-gulden bid. Yosse-Baer's neighbour, in the adjoining pew at the eastern wall, looks at him, as much as to say : " What about you, Reb Yosse-Baer ? " And Yosse-Baer winks to the beadle, which means that he is offering thirteen. . . . And the beadle calls out in his ringing voice :

" Thirteen . . . gulden, for this Portion of the Law ! "

Yosse-Baer regrets it on the instant that he has made the bid. Where is he going to get the money from to pay, since he has next to nothing left to pawn ? And he starts praying to God that someone might come forward and outbid him. . . .

Someone does come forward and outbid him. And Yosse-Baer feels sorry ; and he winks again at the beadle.

And the beadle calls out, looking at Yosse-Baer, with a smile :

" Fifteen . . . gulden for this Portion of the Law ! . . . "

His neighbours at the eastern wall exchange glances and mutter :

" Yosse-Baer is not so badly off at all . . . "

As for Yosse-Baer—he can hardly keep himself from crying out :

" Please, Jews, have pity ! I am a pauper ! . . . "

And on his way home from the synagogue, he reflects with anguish :

" Now I am utterly lost. . . . I shall never learn how to behave like a pauper. . . . When the festival is over, I shall have to pawn the silver candle-sticks to pay for this Reading of the Law. "

## JOURNEYING THROUGH THE MILKY WAY

By L. SHAPIRO

*Translated by JOSEPH LEPTWICH*

L. Shapiro, born in 1878 in the Province of Kiev, in the Ukraine. Published his first sketch in 1903. Has lived in America since 1906. Some of his stories written round the pogroms in Russia made a tremendous impression, and were much discussed in the Yiddish press. His sea-stories were a new appearance in Yiddish. Has translated into Yiddish works by Victor Hugo, Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling. Modernist in style.

### A

At the opening of the century, with the great wave of Jewish immigration, there came to the coast of America a young man of twenty-seven or twenty-eight, with a short, stocky figure and broad shoulders, with a hard head and a thick neck, with white brows above grey eyes, with a sharp-angled chin, and a large mouth fully set with strong, yellowish teeth. He brought from Rumania a sack of belongings slung over his shoulders, a coarse, luscious Yiddish, and a fondness for lies and braggadocio—just the necessary amount. As he came out of Castle Garden, he swept the bustling shores of the Hudson with glad and hungry eyes, settled the sack on his shoulders, and put his right foot forward.

### B

He got a job in a shirt-making workshop. Every Sunday morning he had his shoes shined by one of the shoe-black lads in the street, and in the afternoon he ate a full midday-meal—chopped liver, soup, a quarter of a fowl, fruit salad, tea and cake and a lot of bread—for twenty-five cents. He flirted with girls, but he did not chew gum.

The next thing was that he drove a laundry-cart; then he became a tout outside a ready-made clothier's in Canal Street, tugging at people's coats to get them to come inside, hobnobbing

and quarrelling with the touts employed by adjoining shops, and he spent his evenings in a well-known cellar restaurant in Broome Street, where he ate a broiled beefsteak served up on a wooden platter, and drank sour white wine.

Presently he opened a clothier's shop of his own opposite that belonging to his former employer. He sold it, and opened another clothier's shop—two clothier's shops—six clothier's shops, twenty huge clothier's shops in New York, Baltimore, and Chicago. That was the beginning of the famous firm of "Bender & Bender," employing 35,000 work-people, and one of the largest producers of men's cheap clothing for home and foreign markets.

His body went like this :

When things began to go well with him, he weighed eleven stone six which was a good weight for a man of his build. He gave up the sour wine and started drinking beer, Milwaukee beer. "Schlitz, oh boy !" And in a few years time he weighed twelve stone twelve.

"Hah ! Hah !" he chuckled, "I'll have to set about pumping some of the fat out of me !" He chucked the beer, but he ate well, and he drank soda-water with syrup. He drank every time he came across a soda-fountain and took everyone he knew to have a drink with him, and was not ashamed of the common stuff and the beggarly procedure. When he weighed thirteen stone two, he roared with laughter.

"Ho ! Ho ! I'll have to set about pumping some of the fat out of me !" And in a few months' time he was well over fourteen stone. A man of iron !

As for his soul. Pah ! S-S-Soul ! . . .

## D

He broke the big strike in his workshops so thoroughly that the tailoring unions were practically smashed. But when the war came, and there was a shortage of hands and he got big army and navy contracts, he merrily gave in to all the demands of the union :

"You'll do well out of it, and so will I."

About that time he felt it was getting difficult for him to carry

his body. He repeated his phrase about having some of his fat drawn off, but when he stood on a weighing machine, he manipulated the brass button for a long time, pushed it backwards and forwards, shrugged his shoulders, and couldn't make out what had happened. The indicator showed thirteen stone eight. He had lost over a stone. Then why did he find it so burdensome to carry his body?

It was a lovely war and it made millions for him, and when it ended he weighed twelve stone thirteen. The war did other things, too. It tumbled the world into a sack, shook it up and then tipped it all out again, jumbled, higgledy-piggledy, topsyturvy. It also brought the Balfour Declaration, and his weight was eleven stone six. It reminded him that he was a Jew. Palestine, Erez Israel. Hm. . . . Well, of course, he gave plenty of money. Why shouldn't he? He wasn't short of money, was he? But—

Then the Russians got going. What they launched was more comprehensible to him.

"We'll show 'em," he said, meaning both Russia and its repercussion in this country, our own "Reds." He ate a lot and drank a lot, yet he was always hungry and thirsty. He notified the union that he was laying off some of his hands, cutting the wages of those he retained, and increasing hours. The union threatened a strike, a general strike. They would call out the workers in the textile houses that supplied him.

He laughed at the threat.

"Workers can't stand together," he said to his son, his second in the firm of Bender & Bender, a weedy, soured-looking youth, without the least resemblance to his father.

"Besides," he went on, "let them bring in the textile houses—on my side."

He locked-out his workers. And he had to make a complete change in his wardrobe, because now he was a thin man with broad shoulders, and his suits hung on him like on a scarecrow.

## F

His idea was to play off the "Rights" against the "Lefts."

"They'll do our work for us, my boy," he said to his son.

"The Lefts won't yield an inch. 'No compromise' is the very life-blood of them. As for the Rights—we'll recognise their union and call off the lock-out, if they promise to behave themselves. D'you see?"

His son didn't see.

"The workpeople are with the Lefts," he objected.

"That's fine," he answered. "The workmen? Not all of them. The majority, perhaps, but not all. That means that the official union will be powerless, while the other will be illegal. We'll leave them to fight it out between them. It's a fine game. I like it. And it isn't much I'm risking. Money—perhaps money. While they are staking their . . . lives."

He plunged in thought for a while. Then he said with a wry smile :

"Listen here : I've got 'sugar,' the doctor tells me. What have I got to do with sugar ? Sugar, of all things ! Hah ! Hah !"

He had been to see his doctor, who had told him that there was not the slightest doubt about his having diabetes—and had advised a strict diet.

"What makes you think that I'm going to stuff myself with grass like an ox?"

The cold brilliance of the doctor's spectacles followed the movements of his excited patient, rushing up and down the consulting room—and he hadn't said a word. He had sat there in his easy chair, twirling his silver paper-knife between his fingers—never a word. Then, very deliberately :

"You're like a big baby, aren't you?"

Bender had stopped short, and the two had stared at each other silently for some time.

## G

Bender threw himself eagerly and ardently into the struggle against the workers and into Labour politics. He had tried for three or four days living on a diet, but had gradually forgotten about it. He thumped when he had to, and patted when he had to, and when the bloodshed between the Lefts and the Rights reached its height, he suddenly woke one night out of his sleep, and vomited up everything he had eaten the day before and had gone on vomiting all night, retching with no thing at all, like people who are sea-sick,

Towards morning his head went round and round like a wheel ; one eye was shut, and the lid of the other seemed to be accumulating a load of lead. But the worst of it was that he found himself trying to get into a hole in the ground whose opening was very narrow, but which broadened out as it went on to its bottom. It was evident that if he succeeded in getting into the hole, he would not be able to get out of it again, and he didn't at all want to stop there ; yet he went on pushing farther inside, even trying very hard to scramble through the narrow entrance. There were people moving around him, one of them glinting at him coldly with his gold-rimmed spectacles ; but none of them made any attempt to stop him from pushing into the hole. If he could only jump ! A long jump ! A high jump ! Like this ! Once more ! Higher ! Up-p !

He suddenly broke away from the earth, and flew up among the stars. He had always imagined that it was cold among the stars, but he discovered now that, on the contrary, it was very hot ; though it seemed to be true that there was no air, for he found it difficult to breathe. He wanted to have a look at a star, to see how they manufactured their clothing, and generally how they arranged things ; but that man kept staring at him through his gold-rimmed glasses and speaking to him, wanting to know how he was feeling. How was he expected to feel ? He was feeling very well. He was feeling much better. His head was clearer. Only his stomach was distended and there was a tightness round his heart. What did the doctor think he was doing ? Hadn't he done pumping water into him from that glass vessel ?

"It won't take much longer," said the doctor. "Only a little longer. Till it reaches this mark, do you see ?"

"What's wrong with me, doctor ? Is it the end ?"

"The end ! Oh no ! not at all ! We've brought you back, and we'll put you right. Only you'll have to take care of yourself from now on. Do you get that ?"

## H

When he came out of his coma he surrendered completely, unconditionally. He stuck to his diet rigorously, took insulin injections, submitted to sun-ray treatment. He got a lot of eruptions on his skin, and his weight was under eight stone—near

the danger line. Gaining in weight proved an exceedingly difficult task, but slowly, in the course of several months, they brought his weight up to over nine stone, and his skin was clearer. The doctor was pleased. Though the frequent analysis of his blood revealed a high percentage of sugar, and a slight but persistent acidosis.

His son came and said :

"The workpeople——"

"Give in to them," he cut him short.

"Give in to them?"

"Don't give in to them," he said, closing the conversation with a show of indifference, and turned again to his charts of the heavens.

His room was full of them, and of popular astronomical works. He had suddenly developed an interest in the solar system and most of all in particular planets. He was not so much engrossed in celestial mechanics as he was eager to learn something about the various heavenly bodies. His books bore such titles as *A Message from Mars*, *Under the Rings of Saturn*, *The Romance of the Skies*, *At the Edge of the Universe*. He had got himself a small telescope, had built a glass house for it on his roof, and spent long hours at night gazing at the stars. Around him and in the distance thundered the human life of the greatest city on this small planet, and he looked up at the stars. The collective roar of the town merged into a gentle, flowing murmur that disturbed him as little as silence. But every few minutes a train rushed by on the elevated railway a couple of blocks from his roof, rushed by with an insolent, dissolute, discordant clatter, like a gang of young American rowdies through one of the compartments of that very train, and sometimes he stared with a feeling of irritation after the long line of illuminated windows rushing off hurry-scurry to some place or other. Why? What is the sense of it? Where are we rushing to, where are we going? And he turned back, vexed and bewildered, to his stars.

So it seems that we are right in the middle of the Milky Way, which appears to be so distant and aloof. "A few drops of milk from Juno's breasts . . . spilt against the infant Hercules' lips . . . dripped down and run all over heaven." Absurd! A silly, childish notion! Actually it is a system of worlds—vast worlds—pro-di-gious! Is there life on these worlds, or isn't

there ? And what sort of life is it ? Could it be the same miserable life as down here : with subways, elevated railways, and ten cent stores ? . . .

Here ■ Jupiter, and there is Uranus. These are planets, mere planets, if you please, and ever so much nearer. But the point is not whether they are nearer or farther away—it is rather whether there is a corner somewhere in space, a star, or let us say, a planet, where people live for ever ? Or are things everywhere the same as down here, where no sooner you come back from the market with your acquisitions, than you have to lie down and die ? Is that the purpose of all this complicated machinery ? About as much sense in it as in the idea of Juno's milk !

Towards the end of the winter he tired of his star-gazing. He thrust aside his books, his charts, and his telescope and threw himself with avidity and desperation back into "our miserable life down here."

And this is how he looked at that time :

The skin over his bony cheeks was bronzed and healthy-looking. One single streak of white ran like a smear of chalk across the left side of his black hair. His eyes glowed and seemed to squint a bit. The two separate glances crossed close to his face, as if he were trying to see the bridge of his own nose.

## I

"Will lady wearing red scarf, who was seated on Tuesday, June 23rd, at 5.15 p.m., at the window of a down-town subway train passing the station on 14th Street, please give some information about herself through this newspaper, or through Post Office Box 417 ? Name, address, telephone number—any information will be gratefully appreciated."

This advertisement appeared in the personal column of two of the biggest New York dailies. A negro messenger had brought it to the newspaper offices, paid for a week's insertion in advance and still had a tidy sum left to pay him for his trouble. A broad-shouldered, lean man with glowing eyes had stopped him in the street, and given him the advertisement and his instructions. A gentleman, clearly, but a little out of his mind, m—yes.

During the week the advertisement appeared in all the other big dailies, with one slight difference of wording :

"Will lady wearing red scarf, who smiles so charmingly"—the rest reading as before.

The cry resounded for a week, and subsided. Then it was heard again, and this time it ran in this fashion:

"Will lady, wearing red scarf," etc. "Please answer! You will be well rewarded. There is no difficulty about money. There is no difficulty about anything!"

Several weeks of silence, and then again the cry:

"Lady wearing red scarf. Have you seen my advertisement? Have I offended you by speaking of money? You are not being asked to do anything. I only want to look at you again, to hear your voice. Please, answer! This is the despairing cry of a man who is drowning, drowning——"

All that summer the advertisement in this, its final form, wandered through the pages of the metropolitan press, now here, now there: "Lady wearing red scarf," "Lady wearing red scarf." It even strayed into the columns of the small, local papers of Bronx, Yorkville, Brooklyn, Flatbush. In the autumn it was heard less frequently, like a voice dying away in the forest. And then the lady of the red scarf disappeared beneath the turbid, delirious waves of the daily press.

## J

One morning, a snow-storm, white and blind, fell fiercely upon the city of New York, and that afternoon a man was picked up unconscious in the street, and taken to hospital. There his identity was discovered, and his family was at once notified. He was put into a private room, and surrounded with nurses, doctors, appliances and physic. His heart was a bit strained, but it was working powerfully, only his eyes were shut, his face was red, his breath came rapidly, and hard, and it smelt unmistakably of acetone. He was given insulin injections, and again the tall stand appeared, with the glass bulb from which glucose flowed through a rubber tube with two needles into his blood, at the top of his abdomen, below the ribs. Presently he opened his eyes, and his gaze slowly became clearer. His tongue was parched with thirst, a bitterish, sourish thirst, and he repeatedly asked for water, called for ice, breathed hard, and tossed from side to side. Then he lost the trend of his thoughts, and

was wandering again among his once beloved stars and constellations. Only he could not get out of the Milky Way into space beyond, because a firm hand, though cool and tender, lay on his heated forehead, lay there sure of itself, dominant, and finally took possession of all his thoughts.

"He'll be all right," the doctor said to someone above his head. "Give him a needle, and he'll sleep through the night."

The cool hand was removed from his forehead, and merged into the form of a woman in white. The day nurse, middle-aged and soured, was replaced by the night nurse, a girl in the full flush of youth and health, with white, rounded cheeks and large, grey, calm eyes, with a straight and buxom figure and strong and tender hands.

The sick man sat up in his bed, and looked with staring eyes at his nurse. Then he laid down again on his pillow. He had his prescribed needle and the promised sleep.

He was kept for two days on orange juice and water. They were two days of rest, of well-being, of peace with the world. A vague and languid smile hovered about his lips, and his eyes gazed with mild interest through the windows of his room across the roofs of New York. On the third day they tried giving him gruel in the morning, and again in the evening. The second time he vomited it up; he developed a temperature, and after that he lived continuously in a world in which his room merged with the stars and the stars were one with the hospital. One star, shaped like a glass bulb filled with water stood over against him, shining with a dull, weak shimmer, and in order to catch this star—which it was essential, vital to do—he increased at times the velocity of his flight, at times he thrust himself violently among the stars that were grouped together as densely as grapes in a cluster, but without avail—the glass star was always there, over against him, always on the same path, and he could not touch it, because his hands and feet were tied to a bed!

Then the star vanished, and that was worse, because for all he knew it might be right behind him, it might have stolen round his very back. So he kept twisting his head about, trying to see behind him, but the shaded green light of the night-lamp was not strong enough, and only the white uniform of the nurse kept getting into his range of vision. How full and white her cheeks were! She simply radiated life, vitality—flesh and

blood! Her body under her uniform must be firm and the skin smooth and cool like satin.

"Nurse," the sick man panted as if uphill. "Nurse, dear—when I get better—I'll divorce my wife—and marry you."

"Yes, poor man," the sister of mercy mercifully replied, and dabbed a wet towel across his parched lips. But he had already set out again on his wanderings, at a speed that annihilated time and space. This time he at last broke through the Milky Way, and flew into outer space, till he could no longer find his way back, completely forgot the way and what lay at the back of it. With the ease of a bee among flowers he darted among coloured worlds, new, entirely different—so altogether different! Hot and parched with thirst, so that the lips became dry, cracked and split till the blood actually came. And they changed so rapidly, these worlds. If one could only stop still for a while and look round! Here is a star which seems to be also a wine-cellar. Maybe he got there a juicy, broiled steak and a tankard of ice-cold foaming Schlitz.

## THE KOLA ROAD

By SHALOM ASCH

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

Shalom Asch, born 1880, in Kutno, in the district of Warsaw. The best-known living Yiddish writer. A writer of epic novels. Represents Yiddish literature as honorary member of the P.E.N. Club, and is President of the Yiddish P.E.N. Centre. Many of his works have been translated into Russian, German, French, English, and other languages. Started writing simultaneously in Yiddish and Hebrew about 1900. His "Shtetel" ("Township") published in 1904 was a new appearance in Yiddish literature, and at once lifted him into fame. Has published an enormous number of works—novels and plays. Went to America in 1909 and lived there for a number of years. Is at present living in Paris.

Asch ■ the leading figure in Yiddish literature to-day, and honours have been showered upon him, in his own capacity as a great writer, but also as the recognised representative of Yiddish literature. Speaking at a dinner given in his honour in London by the Pen Club, in March, 1932, Asch suggested that the honour was paid to him probably more because of his position in Yiddish literature than because of actual knowledge of his work, since Yiddish literature was, unfortunately not sufficiently known to English readers.

He has also been banquetted by the Polish Pen Club, the first time that Polish and Jewish writers in Poland assembled at a joint function. In November, 1932, the Polish Government conferred on Asch the honour of an Officer of the Order Polonia Restituta.

### I

BETWEEN Greater Poland and Mazowsze stretches a triangular tract. It is bounded on one side by the sandy hills along the River Vistula, that extend close to the silvery stream around Plock and Wloclawek. On the other side, towards Leczyca, it has as neighbour the Province of Kuyawy, which is full of dark mysteries, and to the left it has the rich and colourful principality of Lowicz.

This area, which includes the towns of Kutno, Zychlin, Gostynin, Gombin and several smaller towns, is rugged and monotonous

like the peasant who lives in it. Poor in water, poor in forest, and the horizon stretches far and wide. The eye finds nothing to rest on. Long, monotonous fields, mostly covered with poor grain, wander away for miles. Sometimes the endless, unvarying, cultivated fields are intersected by a white cart road, scantily planted with weeping willows, that leads from one small town to another.

The area has not the mysterious glamour of its neighbour Kuyawy, about which so many legends are told, that the souls of the dead walk along its black lanes, that twist and turn around the fields, and decoy people into the marshes. Nor has it the richness and the colour of its other neighbour, the "Princess of Lowicz," which produced the greatest Polish musician, the creator of the Polish folk-mazurka—Chopin. The field is rugged and monotonous, and the peasant who works in the field, simple as the potato it yields. The peasant here does not trick himself out in white smock and gaily-coloured trousers, and adorn his hat with ribbons and corals, as the peasant of Lowicz does. And he does not dabble in witchcraft like the peasant of the "tall poplars," which is in Kuyawy. The peasant of the field here is like a clod of earth, into which God has breathed a soul, like a walking lime that grows outside his house. . . . He sticks to his reed, fluting away half through the night, tunes that have no theme, that do not begin and do not end, like his long, rolling, green-covered fields. . . . He is a man without subtleties—"This is the way God made me." If he is in a good mood, he will give you the very shirt off his back. But if he is angered, he is ready to pay for it with his life, but he will have his revenge. He loves his cow, which lives with him, and he will never kill it for his own use. But most of all he loves his horse. He would never dream of using it for toil. In ploughing he prefers to yoke his cow and his wife, but not his horse. He saves his horse for his cart on Sunday, to drive to church, or into the next village, to visit his friends, to show off his horse to them.

The Jew who is born on this soil has more of the field and the orchard in him than of the Religious House of Study and the Ritual Baths. The land is rich in pasture. The peasant breeds cows and oxen and sheep. Jews buy them up from him and take them to Lodz or across the frontier, which is not far away. You find among the Jews there the renowned fishermen of the Lonsk

Lakes, who supply fish for Lodz and for the whole surrounding district in the Provinces of Kalisz and Plock. Where there ■ no railway, there are great strapping fiacre-drivers, who take the Litvaks to the frontier. The peasant breeds his horse, and looks after it well, so there are big Jewish horse-dealers, who supply the Germans, who come down from Thorn and Berlin. The poor Jews rent the orchard from the peasant for the summer. In winter they wash his pelts in the lake, and take them to market in Lowicz, or Gombin. The Jew is in the village all the week long, lives there with the peasant. For the Sabbath he comes into town, to the Three F's Congregation (fishermen, fleshers and fiacre-drivers) to attend service. They divide the honours among themselves, and tell each other stories about what has been happening all through the week. After the Saturday mid-day meal they go into the field, where the horses are feeding, and the youngsters play ball. And at night they sit about on benches outside their houses, and watch the servant-girls go for a walk, and they tell more stories.

In one of these towns there was a street known as the Kola Road. Kola is a small town near by, and the street lies on the route from Zychlin that passes through Krosniewice to Kola. The Three F's Congregation was in the Kola Road. The Kola Road was not in the Exile. No Jews were beaten there. If recruits passing through the town in the autumn got out of hand they were soon dealt with. The shafts were taken out of the carts, iron bars were wrested off the shop-fronts, trees growing in front of the doors were torn up, and the recruits were taught who was the better man.

The Synagogue Street, where the Rabbi and the ritual slaughterers and the Hebrew teachers all lived, and where the poultry-slaughtering yard and the Ritual Baths are situated, felt thoroughly ashamed of the Kola Road. "A lot of boors, butchers and fishmongers!" And though the Synagogue Street lived entirely on the "offerings and Festival moneys" that the Kola Road used to send along, and though no matter what happened in the Synagogue Street—if a shepherd set his dog on, or a drunken Gentile started beating Jews—everybody, old and young, ran screaming into the Kola Street: "Help, they're beating us!" yet at the bottom of their hearts they disparaged them: "Not

like Jews at all," they said to each other. "And when the Messiah comes they will have to ask us to intervene for them." The "best people," of the Broad Street, like Reb Berachiah, the moneylender, for instance, did not think anything of them. "Wild brutes! Speak to everybody as if we were brought up together. But we need them sometimes, for the sake of peace, when the recruits pass here, so that they don't go smashing windows."

It is true that the Kola Road didn't have much to do with the gentry in the other streets. They used to call them "wishy-washy Jews." But if anything happened that required intervention with Heaven, like writing a petition to the Rabbi to pray for a sick child, or to read a Psalm (they were no adepts at that), they had to apply to the Synagogue Street. And when the Solemn Days approached, the Kola Road went in awe of the Synagogue Street. They showed deference to the least of the inhabitants of the Synagogue Street. "One of Moses' bodyguard," they used to say. And on the eve of the Day of Atonement a big strapping Jew, a hulking cabby or a burly fisherman, would lie down on the threshold of the Synagogue, and the Synagogue Street would for God and Heaven inflict stripes on the Kola Road.

In the Kola Road stood a house, built of timber, one storey high, and with long benches in front of the door. It was known as "The Benches," because the crowd used to meet there, and sit in front of the door. Reb Israel Szochlin lived in that house.

Reb Israel was the oldest and most respected inhabitant of the Kola Road. He was an old man—seventy or so, but he walked without the aid of a stick, and he did not wear glasses—a relic of those bygone days when you could get a quart of brandy for a couple of pence. When Reb Israel had chased around for a couple of hours after a bull that had broken loose from his rope, and had caught hold of him at last by the horns, so that the bull had to bow his great neck, he used to groan with a gurgling little laugh—"Not as strong as I used to be!"

He was a big cattle-dealer, who sold to the Germans, thousands at a time. He bought up all the cattle for miles around. And since he was a man who would let the other fellow earn a couple of pence, everybody, Jew and Gentile alike, held him in great

respect. They entrusted to him their money, they came to him to borrow money, they came to him for advice, to adjust their differences, and whatever Reb Israel said went. Reb Israel could box the ears of the biggest and strongest tough (when there was need). No one would dream of contradicting Reb Israel. ■ anyone dared, the Kola Road would probably have killed him on the spot.

All the "boys," as well as the Gentile fellows of the Kola Road, stayed in Reb Israel's house—they drove his oxen to Lodz, or to the frontier. And they spent the night in the stables, with the horses, oxen and sheep. Food was always there for anybody who wanted it; bread and butter always on the table; anybody could come in, cut off a slice, and go. A house full of plenty—cows, oxen, horses, goats, sheep, geese, and Jewish and Gentile "boys." Reb Israel did not keep anything in his house locked away. Nobody would steal anything. It would mean getting killed on the spot. If anyone was wronged in the town, he came running to Reb Israel to complain, and Reb Israel went out and boxed the ears of the offender.

Once the Hassidic Jew who had the tavern rights from the landowner of the town had the home of a widow Jewess raided on a Friday evening. They found brandy there, and she was put in jail. So they came to tell Reb Israel. Reb Israel took his stick and went to see the Hassid.

"Let the woman go!"

"But Reb, Israel. You must admit that she is robbing me of my living."

Reb Israel said no more. He came home and two of the "boys" went into the tavern, armed with cudgels, took two barrels of brandy, twisted the taps out, and put them outside the door. Anyone might take as much as he wanted. Jews had brandy galore that Sabbath. They rolled along the streets drunk, and the licensee got his eyes blacked in the bargain, and was told that he would get some more next week, and he couldn't even complain to anyone.

A lout comes into Reb Israel's house, and stands there at the side of the big cupboard.

"What do you want, tailor-nob?" demanded Reb Israel, going up to him, and smacking him across the face. "You beat your mother, they tell me, you scallywag, you. Who's been

feeding you till now? And if somebody else says a word to her, you whip a knife out!"

"Reb Israel, it's my mother. I may. It's my mother. But anybody else, I'll rip his guts out! Isn't that right, Reb Israel?"

"And what do you want, Zirel?"

"That twister, the Hassid, who owns the oil and paraffin store, wants to give me a gold thick 'un if I crawl over the fence to his competitor, Yoske's son-in-law, and start a fireworks display among his barrels of petrol."

"I'll break your head for you if you do. You take the gold thick 'un, and smash his ribs for him."

"He won't hand over the thick 'un before I've done the trick."

"Tell him to deposit it with me. Then you go to Yoske's son-in-law and get him to kick up a row to-morrow that he has found his barrels opened. I'll give you the thick 'un, and if the twister says anything to you, knock his teeth out."

When a Jew like Reb Israel came home from his business on the road on a Friday evening, he used to sit down on the bench in front of the door, with his pockets full of small coins, and pray ■ God in his heart: Father, send me some Jews who haven't enough money for the Sabbath, and he didn't go into the house till he had distributed every penny of it among the poor. Then he washed himself, put on his Sabbath coat, and went to the Three F's Congregation to welcome the Sabbath Queen.

Beggars or wayfarers tramping the countryside made a point of stopping in the town for the Sabbath because of Reb Israel. The taste of his Sabbath meal lingered for the rest of the year. The congregation was always packed with them. Reb Israel used to take his stand at the door with all the applicants for a meal next ■ him, and wait—there are no Jews who love having a poor man home with them for the Sabbath meal as much as butchers and fishers do—and as many as were left over, Reb Israel took home with him. The Shamash of the Three F's Congregation often had to sing out "Three gulden for a guest," holding them up to auction like the Portions of the Law, because there was so much competition for the honour of taking a wayfarer home to the Sabbath table.

On the Sabbath morning after the service the Rabbi of the congregation stood up and expounded the Midrash. The tears

stood in Reb Israel's eyes. And afterwards he invited the whole congregation to his home for a glass of brandy for benediction. And while they toasted each other, Reb Israel kept banging his fist on the table, and shouting: "Drink Jews! Our Father Jacob! Our Teacher Moses!"

The house shook with the force of his blows on the table.

Reb Israel could read the portion of the Law, and he was at home with Rashi as long as he did not drag in any Aramaic words. Reb Israel loved Rashi. It seemed to him as if he were a near relative, one of the family to every Jew. There was another Jew whom Reb Israel loved—King David. His Psalms diffused sweetness in every nerve—and he was a Jew, King David. You might go out in the street and meet him there, and exchange greetings.

"How do you do, King David!"

"How are things with you!"

And the conversation veers round to the latest about the market.

When Reb Israel's daughter grew up, he went to the Rabbi, and said:

"Rabbi, choose a son-in-law for me, to marry my child, from among your pupils."

He took his son-in-law, and gave him a home in his house for the rest of his days. "Here is your food, your drink, your Sabbath raiment, and your pocket-money, and you sit and study Holy Lore."

He had such respect for his sons-in-law, with their volumes of the Talmud, that he would go on tip-toe when he approached them. He put aside for them the best and most costly things he could get. When he heard the voice of the Law in his house this old Jew wept like a child for joy.

Reb Israel's sons were giants. "Szochlinski's Guardsmen," they were called. They were no students. And the one who surpassed them all was the son of his old age, Nat. Nat was a lad who went out in the morning with Borek, his dog, Bashke his sheep, and his whistle. And a dove stood on his shoulder. The street went in fear of him. He took his stand at the door, with his straw hat set on a rakish angle on the tip of his forelock, and his leaded whip in his hand, and started whistling to his doves,

*who wheeled over his head. Josephine led his horse out of the stable. If it wasn't well groomed, or the mane was not properly combed and twisted round with straw, his whip whistled over her body, so that the young blood in her spurted on ■ his hand.*

Josephine was a maid in Reb Israel's employ, a Gentile girl, who had been brought from the village, and had remained in the house for ever. As strong as iron. She fitted into the family. She was one of themselves, joined in conversation, gave her counsel, and lost her temper when she didn't like things. Nat walloped her, dreadfully sometimes, but she was never angry about that. She tossed her head and stood her ground :

" Wallop away, if you feel like it ! "

And half-an-hour later, when she caught sight of him on his horse, she ran out and stood in front of the door, with arms akimbo, and her eyes smiled through the black and blue marks which he had left on her face. " There's a horseman for you ! "

When he came back, he beckoned to her. At first she pretended not to notice. Then she went up sullenly, and lazily took the reins. He winked at her, and went up on the left to the dove-cote.

She quietly led the horse away to the stable. On the way she met the caretaker of the house, who asked her :

" Who's been decorating your face like that ? "

" Whoever wanted to, and you go to the devil ! " And she snapped her fingers at him, and scrambled hurriedly up to the dove-cote after Nat.

Nat had a dove-cote. It was traditional to have a dove-cote in the loft, where they kept the oats for the horses. No matter where they took the doves to and let them loose, they always found their way back to the loft and stood on the roof. At the other end of the town there was a Gentile baker who also had a dove-cote. Nat and the baker waged perpetual warfare. Nat released his doves. The baker released his. Sometimes it happened that one side won a dove from the other. A hen belonging to one side came along and started flirting with a cock, and lured him away to her dove-cote.

That was where the gang came in. Nat had his gang of boys, Jewish and Gentile, who spent the night with him. The baker had his gang of bakehouse boys. If one side got hold of a dove belonging to the other side, there was jubilation, as ■ the world had been conquered, while the other side went about dejected,

plotting revenge. That led to constant fights between Nat's gang and the baker's gang, something awful.

## II

It was a Friday afternoon in summer. Reb Israel had just come home from the road. Casimir, the groom, had led the horses to the pump to drink. Josephine was taking the things off the cart. Among the rest she unloaded a goose, a turkey, a sackful of fish that Reb Israel had bought on the road and brought home for the Sabbath. Suddenly one of the "boys" jumped into the courtyard, thrust two fingers between his lips, and emitted a shrill whistle that made your ears throb.

"What's the matter, you bastard!" asked Nat, coming into the courtyard with Bashke.

"The baker has let out his doves. The dove-cote is standing on the roof near the City Hall."

In two leaps Nat was up in the loft, had opened his dove-cote, and released his doves.

Holding his whip and surrounded by his gang, Nat rushed into the street. On the other side of the market square, high in the clouds sailed the doves, with fluttering wings, in two separate flocks. Sometimes one flock flew into the other. They merged for a moment, but soon separated. Sometimes they swooped down towards the market-square, and sometimes they flew up on high. Then, after wheeling round several times on high, the doves settled on the roofs.

High on one of the roofs stood one dove, all alone, as if cast out by the rest. A hen dove belonging to Nat's flock presently flew up to him and started a conversation. Nat's gang watched it with beating hearts, waiting for the two doves to reach an understanding, and together fly into Nat's flock. One of the boys in the baker's gang suddenly threw a stone up on to the roof, and the doves flew off.

That started it. One of Nat's gang went up to him, and slashed him across the legs with his stick. The fellow went down on the ground and started bellowing for all he was worth. The baker's gang rushed up with their cudgels, and the battle was on. There was nothing else to be seen but cudgels whirling about and crashing down on heads. Here was a Jewish boy,

there a Gentile fellow stretched on the ground with blood streaming from his face. Blind Leib came running out of the slaughter-house with a shaft in his hand, whirling it over everybody's heads. Nat got hold of the baker by the lapels ; with one hand he held him fast by the lapels, so that he couldn't get away, and with the other he punched him in the face, in the sides, under the belt. Every blow went home with a thud, and in the end the baker lay down on the ground. And above them the doves kept flying, one flock sailing into the other, as if they knew that the fight was on their account. They flapped their wings as they flew low, almost touching the combatants' heads, and then they soared up high into the sky.

When they saw the baker was done, that he couldn't even get up, the gangs separated to see what would happen next. The two doves managed to reach an understanding ; the hen lured the cock into Nat's dove-cote. Nat's gang went mad with joy. And the baker's gang plotted revenge.

That Friday night the baker stole up into Reb Israel's loft, where Nat had his dove-cote, and wrung the necks of one dove after the other. It was a risky job, however. The doves sensed the stranger among them, and began to flap their wings, and flew, clucking, from one end of the dove-cote to the other. Josephine, who slept in the room beneath the dove-cote, quickly ran to wake Nat, tugging at his hair.

"Young master, there's someone in your dove-cote."

Nat seized a bar of iron, that always lay beside his bed, and went up into the loft.

As he rushed into the loft, he got a blow with something on his skull, so that he saw stars. But he took no notice of that. He grappled with the fellow, stuffed his mouth, so that he shouldn't be able to shout, and then he set about giving him a hiding. He thwacked him over the head, he pummelled him in the sides, until he himself felt that he had given him enough. Then he took him by the head, dragged him down from the loft, and deposited him outside his own door.

A couple of days after that they clapped Nat in jail. They didn't bring it off immediately, of course. The sergeant of the local police came to fetch him, but Josephine decoyed him into the stable (she said she had something to tell him). He went with her very willingly. There were some lads waiting there for

him in the dark, and they dealt with him so efficiently that he couldn't come a second time to fetch Nat. The town started feeling afraid. All sorts of rumours began to fly round. Nat was said to be going about the streets with his leaded whip, and his Bashke at his heels. But three jail warders and two policemen who were stationed in the town fell on him and carried him off to jail.

Meanwhile the baker died. The town was in a state of terror. Queer tales were told. The peasants were gathering here, they were mustering there. Yechiel, who went peddling through the villages, told them in the House of Learning that a peasant woman in one of the villages had asked him to look into a mirror and he had seen the Rabbi's head there, and the peasant woman had said that she had put a spell on him. They went on to talk of blood libels. Reports came from the adjoining villages of attacks being made on the dairymen, who were despoiled of everything. The town met in the Rabbi's house. A day of fasting was proclaimed. The wealthier Jews left the town. The Synagogue Street looked as if Death were parading up and down, with his black wings outspread. Candles were burnt all day in the House of Learning, and Jews kept reading Psalms. Mothers suddenly started kissing and slobbering over their children when they came home from Hebrew School. Betrothals and weddings were all put off till "after," when things would be more calm. Jewish patrols were out in the streets at night, armed with cudgels. Psalm-readers were up all night in the House of Learning reading Psalms.

Nat stared through the tiny bars of his cell that looked out on the market-place. Each morning Josephine carried the dove-cote past the cell window, and showed him that it had been cleaned. Bashke and the dog Borek lay all day in front of the window, and their master spoke to them through the bars. And his gang had to drive the doves every day past the window, and he stood there, issuing orders, telling them what to do.

In the town, people kept getting more frightened. They went about looking like shadows. The Gentiles of the town, who lived amicably with the Jews all the year round, began to fill them with dread now. The water-carrier, who delivered water all the year round to Jewish houses, was said to have told a Jew that when St. John's market day came, he would go for Moshkowski's house. The candle-lighter in the synagogue would be

appointed supervisor over the Jews, and the Gentile who helped with the burials in the cemetery would be an official, and the Jews would have to pay him tribute. Jews listened to these tales and went about in fear. Girls were sent away from home. People hunted up distant uncles and aunts, and sent their children to stay with them. The Synagogue Street prepared for whatever might happen: "Lord God, we are in Your Hand. Your Will be done!" The Kola Road kept calm. As if nothing was happening. If one of them met a Jew from the Synagogue Street wearing a long and dismal face, he would say to him: "Hi, you blighter! Have you got your funk-hole ready at home?"

They said that the day of reckoning would be on St. John's market day. That was one of the most important market days in the town. The peasant comes into the town for the first time after the harvest. The barns are bursting with corn. The fields are crammed full of potatoes and cabbages. The peasant comes into the town with his wife and children to buy them gifts. He sells the full-grown cattle, and buys young ones to crop his reaped fields. He meets his cronies at the fair, finds out what sort of a harvest they've had this year, and they go off together to have a drink of whiskey.

The Jews looked forward each year to that day, hoping to earn something, but this year it filled them with dread, and they only hoped that it would pass without trouble.

When the day arrived, Jews hurried off to the synagogue, and started to pray. The Rabbi stood at the reading-desk, and there was an outburst of weeping, as at the concluding service on the Day of Atonement. After the service, the Rabbi mounted the stairs, and stood by the Ark, and the whole congregation recited with one voice the Death Bed Confession of Faith. The Rabbi said the first verse, and then the congregation said the next. Before they dispersed to their homes, everybody wished each other that they might live to meet again to-morrow. . . .

Meanwhile peasant carts were heard rumbling over the town bridge. Carts arrived in the market place. Every sound of a cart filled Jewish hearts with the fear of death. It seemed as if the carts were being driven differently this time, as if the peasants and their women were walking differently.

For the present, things went as usual. The peasants sold what

they had to sell, haggled about the price, and in the end bought what they needed.

At first, the Jewish shops were closed. A peasant wanted to buy some herrings, so a herring-woman opened her herring shop for a minute to sell him his herrings. Another peasant came up, and a third. When the shopkeeper across the road saw this shop open, he opened his shop as well. Gradually all the shops opened. The day seemed to be going like any ordinary market day. Jews began to pluck up courage, and started bargaining with the peasants. Suddenly a youth came running from the horse market, shouting: "They're hitting Jews!"

In one minute all the shops were shut. The shutters were pulled down over the windows, and the doors of the houses were barred. Women and men snatched what they could under their arms—a child, a lamp, a table, a cover—and fled as if from a fire. But they soon stopped, not knowing where to run. They crawled under the beds. . . . Lay there for a minute . . . crawled out again. . . . Pushed aside the wardrobe, and got under it. . . . Out again. . . . Up into the garret; some crept down into the cellars; some scrambled up on the top of the stove. Children cried. Their mothers stuffed pillows into their mouths so that they should not be heard outside. Somebody was beating ■ the door outside, begging them to let him in. People found themselves in strange houses. They ran into the first house they came across. Fathers in other people's houses groaned, wondering where their children were. And pressed other people's children to their breasts.

The Kola Road had also heard that Jews were being beaten. Hershalé Cossack ran out of the slaughtering-yard, snatched up a sack as he ran, flung into it three ten-pound weights, tied it up, and slung it over his shoulder. Come along, brothers! The entire Kola Road followed him—the butchers carrying their choppers and knives. The cabbies tore the shafts out of their carts. The fishmongers caught up the hooks with which they pull their boxes of fish out of the water. The horse-dealers got on their horses, and with their steel whips in their hands clattered along to the horse-market.

The big square, out of which two roads run, was crammed with carts, carts, carts, that were, however, submerged, swamped in horses, oxen, people and pigs. It was a multi-coloured picture,

and there was a confusion of sounds. Drunken peasants with cudgels in their hands were chasing Jews in long gaberdines, who were leaping like frightened hares over carts, horses and people. The terrified cry of someone jumping for his life over a cart, and shouting frantically for help was merged with a burst of wild, drunken laughter. Horses kicked and plunged, and people were lying under their hoofs, and pigs were squealing. Sticks, stone pots and hats went flying over people's heads. Frightened geese and fowls rushed squawking past the carts. Feathers came off their straggling wings and flew up in the air. Jews in black gaberdines went rushing all over the place, screaming terribly.

Then the Kola Street plunged into the panic like a stream of glowing steel into the deep cold sea. They were soon at each other's throats. Lumps of steel and iron thudded on human flesh, blood coursed down eyes, gaberdines, carts and wheels. It was impossible to see whom or what. Everything was mixed up, horses and people, people and horses. A peasant woman, covered with blood, dragged along her injured husband, and he kept hitting her in the belly, and trying to break away from her. Little children trailing at their mothers' skirts. Fathers pushing their children away from them and pressing with set lips and bloodshot eyes into the mêlée. And the mêlée was not a battle in which one tried to overcome the other. It was a mix-up. A plague came upon them. One dashed his fist into somebody's jaw, caught hold of his tongue and pulled at it, throttled him. Two fell upon each other, got jammed together against a cart, and pounded away at each other's chest with his fist and bit at him with his teeth. It was not a battle in which one sought to be victor. The slumbering beast in man was roused. It was a welter of confusion. Everybody was out to eat up alive the next man in the sight of heaven and God.

### III

Nat looked all day out of the jail-window. He was not sorry for the affair he had started—he was not the sort to regret. He had waited for the minute for it to begin. He had no plan how to get out of here. He hadn't thought about it. He was not the kind of man to make plans. When ■ comes, it flares up, crashes and bursts like thunder.

Then he saw people start running across the market from the horse-square. A youth ran by with bleeding head. Women were rushing all over the market collecting the children. Shops were being closed. He felt that something was going to happen. A stream of blood ran down from his heart and filled his hands and feet. He bit his lips. His eyes were suddenly bloodshot. He hurled himself against the door. But the door—though it was only the door of a small town lock-up—was strong enough to withstand a man's hand. So he caught hold of the bars at the window. They bent in his grip, but they were too firmly built into the wall. He seized his plank bed, and banged it against the stove, and in a minute boards and bricks were all mixed up. Like a thunder locked into the room, he hurled himself against the walls. Finally he dug his teeth into his hands, bent his head between his knees, and started groaning, so that the groans rose to the ceiling and beat against the bars, and went out of the window.

He lay like that a long time, till a voice called to him from the window :

" Young master ! Young master ! "

He looked out of the window, and saw Josephine with her hair flying loose.

" At your father's," she screamed, and handed him an iron bar through the window.

He hurled himself at the door, prised the iron bar between the door-handles, leaned his heart against it, and pushed with all his soul—one, two, three—and the door broke open with a bang. The policeman who tried to stop him got a punch on the jaw that felled him, and lay in a pool of blood. Nat rushed home to his father.

The peasants of the horse-market made for Reb Israel's house.

" To Szochlinski's, whose son killed a peasant ! " they shouted, rushing into Reb Israel's house with spades and pickaxes.

They poured into the courtyard, and stood outside the house, and the cry went down the Kola Road : " They're at Reb Israel's." And the whole of the Kola Road went into battle, little and big. Blind Leib (who could snap a bar of iron) laid his hand on a pitch-fork in the stable. The Kola Road surrounded the courtyard.

"What ■ this!" cried Reb Israel, coming out and standing ■ by himself in the midst of the peasants, clutching the iron bar that he sometimes had to use on the Lodz Road against the Lodz thieves.

"Whom have you come here to attack? Me? I have worked all my life for you, dogs that you are, bought up your cattle, paid you good cash, and exported them for you somewhere abroad. Worked hard for you, in the heat of summer, in the cold of winter, and stuffed your pockets with hundreds. Come here, you dogs! Here I am! Which of you will dare touch me?"

The peasants were silent. Then one of them cried:

"We have nothing against you, Szochlinski. It is your son we want, the one who killed the peasant."

"Here I am!" cried Nat, throwing open the door into the courtyard, and coming up at a run. He caught up the first peasant he could lay his hand on, lifted him by the hips up in the air, and then flung him down on the ground, so that one heard his legs crack as he fell. The peasants hurled themselves on him like a whirlwind. Nat seized another of them by the head, lifted him up, and used him as a battering ram against the rest. Then the Kola Road plunged into the fray, right among the peasants.

But Reb Israel's voice stopped them.

"Stay! I tell you to keep off! He has killed a man! Let him fight his own fight!"

And Nat fought his own fight. Using the peasant as a battering ram, he laid about him on all sides. They fell before him like corn before the scythe. A peasant hit him over the head with a spade, and blood poured down and ran over his face. He didn't let go of the peasant whom he was using as a battering ram. He fought his way deeper into the midst of the peasants. He snatched a spade out of the hands of a peasant, and lunged about him with superhuman strength. His great arms filled with blood, till the veins stood out as if they were going to burst. Another peasant caught him a blow in the side from behind with an iron bar. He bent down, and stayed like that for a minute. Then he was at it again. His hands were seized from behind. He kicked, bit—then he bent down again and held his side.

"You dirty dogs!" Josephine cried, appearing suddenly as ■ from under the earth, with a rake in her hand. "You have killed the young master!" She banged her rake over the head of the

peasant who was holding on to one of Nat's hands, and then she went for the other.

"I'll show you," she shouted. And wielding her rake, she pushed the peasants away from Nat, who was now bent low to the ground, holding one hand to his side; in the other he held the spade, hitting out at anyone who tried to come close to him, till Josephine helped him into the house and put him down on the bed.

The peasants wanted to make another move, but they saw the Kola Road standing by with their weapons, and they retreated, one with a bleeding head, another with a smashed hand, leaving the courtyard spattered with blood, and about seven or eight of their company lying about the courtyard, groaning. One said to the other: "That scum isn't a Jewess!"

The market day was over, and the Synagogue Street crawled out from behind the stoves and cupboards, from the lofts and cellars where they had hidden. When they came into the synagogue next morning, they greeted each other and sang aloud: "Give thanks unto the Lord." After prayers they sent for cake and brandy, and the congregation decided to have a party that night. Kasriel and Ozer, Reb Israel's sons-in-law, promised to get their father-in-law to give them Nat's doves. Nat was at death's door, so he would not be able to object. And it was only right that Jews should, in celebrating their deliverance, eat of the doves that had endangered the entire Jewish community, and thus get rid of this whole business of doves, which brought such danger and affliction on Jews.

That is what happened. The two young men came home from synagogue and talked it over with their father-in-law. They went up into the loft, and took all the doves and sent them to the slaughterer to be killed.

Nat lay on his bed, deathly pale. His head was bandaged, and he had ice on it, his lips were still set tight, and he breathed heavily. At his side sat Josephine, handing him whatever he wanted. He heard someone moving in the loft. He sensed the doves beating their wings. It lifted him out of his bed, but he was helpless. He kicked off the blanket, and lay there, listening.

The doves beat their wings. Nat looked at Josephine and pointed up to the ceiling. Josephine went out, went up to the loft, and brought down to him in her arms a couple of fledglings, whose mothers had just been taken away and sent to the slaughterers to be killed. They had hardly any feathers yet on their wings, and they flapped their wings, seeking something. They tucked their thin necks, which had a thin, warm little skin stretched over a delicate little bone which would snap under a finger, beneath their wings, and their wings were seeking something.

He took them in his hand, clenched his teeth, and with his leg pushed away the chair that stood beside the bed. The doves quivered in his hand, and searched for something pathetically. He put them under his shirt, and snuggled them against his breast, and warmed them.

The doves quivered tenderly against his breast, seeking something, pleading for something, flapping their wings.

His face became more pale. His eyes grew glazed and retreated behind his forehead, his nose stretched out, became elongated, paler, thinner, and his lips seemed to crumple up.

The room became silent. A slight wind trembled upon the window-panes. Everybody moved out of the room, and left the house to the thunder that was about to burst and destroy everything. He lay there, and felt the young, weak fledglings quiver upon his breast. His eyes started out of his face like fists, and filled up entirely with blood. And he kept silent.

He sat up in bed and looked round. He saw some grains of wheat. He ground them with his teeth into flour. He pushed the fledglings' bills into his mouth and fed them with his tongue. The fledglings' thin little necks quivered between his fingers and their wings pleaded. . . .

"God!" he suddenly cried out—seized the first dove and wrung its neck. The dove cried out once, and a thin stream of blood spurted into his face. He wrung the neck of the second dove, and hurled it away from him. Then he got out of bed, seized the mirror and banged it down on the floor. He went up to the wardrobe—one blow, and it was lying smashed to smithereens. Over to the bed. Ripped up the bedclothes with his teeth, and the feathers scattered. Another blow shattered the table. He caught up a chair and hammered away at the stove, and the stove caved in and crashed to the ground. He tore his

shirt to threads, and bit his hands. Finally he collapsed on the floor, and dug his face into the wreckage, down on the floor, and fell asleep, and slept long—long. . . .

No one dared to enter the room to wake the sleeping thunder. . . .

## TEARS ON STONES

By PERETZ HIRSHBEIN

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

Peretz Hirshbein, born 1880, in the province of Grodno. His father was a poor miller. His childhood days were solitary, spent in the mill. Until the age of twenty he studied Talmud. Made his first appearance in literature in 1905, with a realistic drama in Hebrew. Is the author of a great many plays, the first playwright of real literary importance on the Yiddish stage. Organised in 1908 a troupe of young Yiddish players to raise the standard of the Yiddish theatre. Has lived in America since 1910. Has travelled all over the world.

### I

EYES fill sometimes with unexpected tears that shut out the light. Eyes fill sometimes with an unexpected vision. Eyes are dazzled sometimes, darkened, both by intense sorrow and by ecstatic joy. And eyes are often overhung by a pale film due to old age, as sometimes there is the reverse—sometimes in old age a man's eyes burst open youthfully.

Reb Jonathan had marvelled more than once how his eyes—now, now, they were simply leaping out of his head, because the world was too bright with the Precious Light—and now, they were sinking behind his forehead, burying themselves in their sockets, because that which they were fated to see was a sore punishment for the world, a visitation. Would that he were no longer able to see now, in his 'eighties!

Of his eighty years Reb Jonathan had spent fully fifty in the city and the land desired of his soul. He lived in Jerusalem, at the crossroads of all worlds. Not far from the Via Dolorosa. For fifty years, unless he was ill in bed, as long as he was well, had all his faculties, he never missed going at his own slow pace, with his black gaberdine over his shoulders, day in, day out, twice every day, to the Wailing Wall, and there he shed his tears. His fingers, pale and tapering in youth, and bluish and gnarled now, stroked the grey, slippery stones of the Wailing Wall. His eyes filled with mist every time he wanted to count the stones,

distinguish stone from stone. The stones actually merged into each other, and now, now, they were melting, and, like water running down from the hills, the stones would soon flow away.

At the Wailing Wall, where his eyes grew dim, his hearing grew acute, heard every sound, every rustle, every murmur carried by the wind that passed over the grey wall. Reb Jonathan turned his ears now to the east and now to the west, sometimes to the south, and sometimes to the north—maybe he would hear the footsteps of the Messiah.

There had been all sorts of times. Times for which Reb Jonathan had waited. Times such as carried on their wings good tidings for the whole world and for the people of Israel. He had often heard the footsteps of the Messiah. Here they were, close ■ hand, very close at hand. He actually caught on the wind the sound of a galloping horse. He heard the earth itself begin to rumble, and those that sleep in the dust had already heard the cry, were awakening and setting out on their road to resurrection, rolling under all the worlds and beneath the depths of the ocean. He actually heard it.

And yet his eyes were filled with tears, were more dim now than ever, and shut out the light.

## II

Reb Jonathan heard footsteps. They came from afar, and the more they approached, the more distant they remained—insolent footsteps.

"Who are they?" his eyes questioned fearfully.

"Who are they? No one comes in advance of them. The footsteps of the Messiah are farther off than ever, have grown silent in the wrangling of the day. So who are they?"

He saw them day in, day out at the Wailing Wall.

They, too, come with staring eyes. They, too, mutter something, a muttering that proceeds at times from the depths. But it is not a prayer. Not even the sighing of an anguished soul. They come eagerly and their faces are full of audacity, and in their hands is strength, that does not draw the heavens. And how did she come here? The sinful she? She who lives only by the merit of the man, who has herself no place beneath the sky—the daughter of Eve who tasted of the forbidden fruit. . . . Her

head is uncovered, and therefore her hands are insolent—therefore her tread sends up sparks of black fire.

What do they want ? That, too, his old lips asked, day in, day out, without waiting for an answer. In his sacred tomes he found no solution.

No doubt they flee . . . no doubt they have escaped destruction—that is why they come, like that, without a prayer on their lips. Why does the Messiah allow these people, insolent, though persecuted, impatient, though tormented, to forestall him, to run on ahead of him ? How was it possible that the earth should receive with compassion these people who have flung off the burden of Heaven, and allow them to put up their huts ?

He had heard that those who had come before their time had pitched their tents in all the four corners of the Holy Land, on all the roads and cross-roads—in the Valley of Jezreel, the Valley of Sharon, by the hills of Judea and by the hills of Galilee. They had reached as far as the Jordan, and they had already attempted to spread their tents even to the other side of the Jordan. He had heard that they had all been trained, both youths and maidens. They had trained their arms for war, and could lie in wait for the enemy even in the dark. He had heard that together with their tents they had already dug graves under their camps and buried their dead in the Holy soil.

And where is the Messiah, the Son of David ? Is it possible that they have utterly denied Him ? Will not wait for him ? Is it possible ?

True, it has been said : " In that day will our mouths be filled with laughter, and our tongues with song."

Oh, how they laugh ! Oh, how they sing. . . . Laughter and song—it is, indeed, a sign. But it depends who laughs and who sings. He would have wished to confess that his years that were passing away might witness the throes of the coming of the Messiah.

But who ■ to feel the anguish ? To whom do these words apply ?

A thought worried him. He could not put it into words. Nor did he wish to. The earth might one day be covered with sin, even as the waters cover up the sea. The strength which these Haluzim had brought with them was not for the sake of the law. Not to serve God and to pray to Him. What had indeed become

of Israel's remnants in the lands of their dispersion? They had learned the ways of their neighbours. Had become rational. But in their strength why had they turned their eyes and their strength to the foundations of Jerusalem, and would not leave even the stones lie in peace?

That was what he could not understand. More than once the earth around Jerusalem had trembled. More than once the earth had thundered, and stones went flying about like splinters.

He often went out of the Jaffa Gate, turned aside downhill, and looked at the rock that Haluzim had blasted out of the earth so that one day there would be a building standing there. But at present there was no sign of that. One saw only the havoc. The rock was split, torn out by the heart and the roots.

He saw among the ruined fragments of stone youth and maiden, both equal, both devoted to the cause, working beyond their strength, trundling the stones along on barrows, carrying them on their shoulders. They were digging down deeper into the still-unquarried rock, "If I be not for myself, who shall be for me. And if not now, when then, when then?" Hack, hack into the stone. Hack, hack into the stone. And the singing, the two-fold singing of youth and maiden. . . . "If I be not for myself, who will be for me?—And if not now, when then, when then?"

What was the meaning of such a song? Did it refer to these? How?"

### III

It was towards evening, in midsummer. He was walking along the road towards the Wailing Wall, as was his wont. And he turned aside to a stone quarry. He found it hard. Hard to pick his faltering steps downhill over piles of crumbled stones. It was quiet among the stones. So he had thought there was nobody there. He only wanted to look at the stones. And perhaps to ask the dumb stones:

"What is the aim and what is the purpose of tearing up in lumps the stone that upholds the foundations of the Holy City?"

That was what he wanted to ask the dumb stones. Of course, these were not the stones that were despised by the builders, and that would be the corner-stone of the edifice. Of course not.

But as he came down into the pit from which the stones were

Reb Jonathan came closer. Only about ten paces divided him from the two, when his feet stumbled. A stone slipped from under his right foot, and Reb Jonathan fell. Fell heavily. A lump of old age fell upon the jagged, shattered stones. The stones rolled downhill, and took him with them. Before his eyes grew dark he thought he was falling into a black abyss. That he would roll down and down, till his bones were smashed. It was a sin to turn aside from the straight road, a sin that could not be wiped out.

But the stones were not so hard, after all, not so merciless. It was only his age that had stumbled in an unfamiliar place. His age—insufficiently tested. For when he opened his eyes and found that he was lying low, almost in a hollow, with a sack bedded under him, he felt no pain. He was only a little more aged in the presence of these two young people who were looking fearfully and anxiously into his eyes.

#### IV

When Reb Jonathan came to, his limbs would not let him rise. The two Haluzim, youth and maiden, who had interrupted their scanty meal, both gazed into the old man's eyes. Without speaking a word they exchanged glances, and did not know what to say, where to begin. They were amazed. What had brought the old man down into the pit? What had brought him here, to fall among the quarried stones?

Reb Jonathan rubbed his eyes. His lips mumbled something. Possibly a prayer that welled up from his heart, and made his lips move. ■ was more surprising to meet these two young people here, so near. He saw their faces distinctly now. Their eyes seemed so familiar to him. He wanted to begin, to say something, ask something, and he could not think of the first word ■

say. Of course, they had saved his life. They had apparently lifted him up and laid him down on the sack.

"Perhaps you will take a drink of water?" she asked him, handing him a tin can of water from between the stones.

Reb Jonathan did not answer, and he made no move to take the water from her hand. For a moment he was aware what he ought to have asked them, since things had happened so, and they were here alone in this extraordinary manner. He would ask them whether they could hear the footsteps of the Messiah. . . . He would have liked to ask them something else as well. Why had they thrust back the Messianic age? Why had they run ahead of the Messiah? That is what he had wanted to ask them? He had a curse at this moment on his lips. And no doubt it was the curse that had led him away from his road and had hurtled him downhill among the heaped-up stones. The curse had scorched his lips for a time, like a glowing coal. And in the end the curse had rolled off his tongue, and rolled down among the shattered stones. It would be difficult to go and look for the curse now. It was not worth while going to look for the curse.

His sad glances began to wander about—now to the youth's hands, now to hers. Heavy hands—real toil-worn hands. And here were his blackened, rolled-up, grazed, bare feet. Full of wounds, of course. And unwillingly his eyes fell on her feet—the same thing. Wounds. The skin torn away about the ankles, and tied up with white bandages that were already dirty with dust. Real wounds. Jewish wounds. Messianic wounds.

He wanted to raise himself, but couldn't. And when the youth turned to him, wanted to help him to rise, wanted to lift him under the arm and conduct him out of the world of stones, the old man signed to him that there was no need. He would like to stay here.

The youth and the maiden did not understand. And as for questioning him, they did not know what to ask. So they just gazed with astonishment at the tears that welled unceasingly from the old man's eyes, rolled down his aged, wrinkled face, and fell on the broken stones.

Tears on stones. . . .

The evening approached and it, too, dropped its tears on the stones.

## REPULSED

By I. M. WEISSENBERG

*Translated by HANNAH BERMAN*

Isaac Meier Weissenberg, born in Poland, 1881. His parents were poor and up to the age of twenty-five he was a workman in Warsaw and Lodz. His first stories were published in 1904 and about two years afterwards ■ gave up his work and devoted himself completely to literature. He has won recognition as one of the chief figures in Yiddish literature. An uncompromising realist, he has very definite ideas about artistic form, and has written extensively on the subject, heading a revolt against certain tendencies in Yiddish literature. He has also given much attention to the study of phonetics, to transmit correctly the pronunciation of Yiddish among Polish Jews. His works have appeared in several collected editions. He has translated the "Arabian Nights" into Yiddish. A number of his stories have appeared in Hebrew, German, French, Spanish, and other languages.

ONE morning, it must have been about nine o'clock, I came to a friend of mine whom I could otherwise not find except in bed, for he was a busy man. But the room was already tidied up, and he himself was sitting up writing a letter. He did not see me come in, and I did not dare to disturb him, so intense was the silence which just then hovered in every corner of the room; it also rested on his cleanly-washed face and his white-covered bed which stood to the right of a big, bright window through which the sun peeped in, full of morning freshness. Involuntarily, I was reminded of my little village where I used to pass my mornings quietly and peacefully. The silence I knew when I gazed out of the window on to the fields came upon me now. And I remembered the slenderness of the trees that stand there, their tall tops reaching deep into the blue sky. Involuntarily I sighed, remembering the morning songs of the birds and the little breeze which used to come to me from other worlds, to tell me about a king's son and the daughter of a queen. . . .

My friend who had been busy till now, just noticed me, and indicated that I should sit down.

"What a terrible silence," I said to him ; and my friend looked round.

"Where ?"

"Not here . . . outside . . ."

He stared at me in surprise, and I myself felt ashamed. Of course, I was thinking of the silence out there. . . .

I watched my friend's face, on which the sun shone and sparkled with blotches of light. A strange stillness lay on it, as he sat there absorbed in his writing.

When he finished, I asked him quietly :

"Whom are you writing to ?"

"To a girl," he replied, staring hard at me.

"Have you known her long ?"

My friend smiled happily, abstractedly, and then, dropping his palish face with the chin just beginning to sprout hair, almost imperceptible still, down on his chest, he asked :

"Does it matter ?"

"No, of course not. I know it doesn't. . . . But when you've got as far as writing letters——"

"Yes, certainly we know each other for a long time."

I was silent, but a little later I said :

"Since you ask if it matters, I am bound to answer that it matters neither one way or the other. It depends how things work out . . ."

"Is that so ? . . ." said my friend, shrugging his shoulders.

"She loves you ? . . ."

"Yes," he said, rolling the word off his tongue with special emphasis.

"Then it is different . . ."

But strange, he hadn't said a word about it before. Love must have a tongue for not speaking with. . . .

He fell into a reverie, and smiled to himself about something, doubtless, her love of him. And I got up, and went, unwilling to take up any more of his time.

Six weeks later, I came to him again. The dusk was falling. The darkening sky had penetrated through the window. Shadows were lurking in the corners, and the ceiling was a mass of grey murkiness. My friend was lying on his bed, curled up like a ball, fully dressed. His head was completely out of sight, sunken down between his shoulders, and his face was buried in his hands.

I felt a stab at the heart, seeing him lie there like that.

"Solomon, are you asleep?" I asked involuntarily in a loud, sharp voice, like one who sees an unexpected sight.

My sudden loud cry caused a shudder to pass over his whole body. And when he had turned his face towards me, his forehead became furrowed.

"I am not asleep . . ."

And his voice sounded just like that of a sick, helpless child.

"Then what are you doing—just lying down?"

"Just so . . ."

"Oho!" thought I, and stood by his bed for a while as though riveted to the spot.

"Do you want to lie there like that?" I asked, more calmly, having considered the situation, and grasped that things were not quite smooth with him.

He roused himself, and sat up on the bed.

"What's the news?" I asked after a brief silence, sitting down on the bed next to him.

"There isn't any news," he answered, looking down on the floor.

He put his hand to his head, and in silent abstraction passed his finger over the furrows on his brow.

"Do you get any letters?"

"No," he answered, tersely.

I could not bear to see his grief, and I asked him if he would come out with me for a bit.

"No," he answered again tersely. Then, when I had been silent for some time, finding nothing to say to him, he turned to me:

"David, do you think she has played me false?"

"No," I said, "I think nothing . . ."

"Then why are you like that, eh?" he went on, shaking his head sadly.

"No, I am not like that . . . I don't know. . . . I heard you say that you don't get any letters . . ."

"Listen," he said to me, "■ is true that I don't get any letters, but I know her noble heart! . . ."

"All right . . ."

There was another silence, and a sad, melancholy smile spread over his face. Then he said to me:

"Fool . . . I know her noble heart only too well. . . . She knows that such things are not to be trifled with. . . . She is well educated, widely read, knows a great deal. And that alone is a great thing . . ."

"Then why doesn't she write to you?"

"You see, that ■ exactly what I don't know," he said, with a toss of the head, as though he were confronted by an inscrutable riddle. "But," he added a little later, "I wouldn't go and plead with her ■ love me. It was not I who suggested it. She used ■ come and call me out of the room . . ."

And then, pondering a while, he began his story:

"We lived in the same house; that is to say, her family lived there and I had a room there, and the door was next to hers. At first I was very distant to her. I sometimes saw her going for a walk in the forest all by herself, but I had no excuse for telling her that I should like to go with her. Perhaps she would have liked it, too; but she certainly could not tell me so. One evening she stood beneath my window, pale and abstracted. I saw it, and went out, not to her, but I stood on the doorstep, and looked out. She saw me, and asked me if I heard the croaking of the frogs. The moon stood, yellow and dreamy, over the tops of the trees in the forest. It had almost set, it was a brief summer's night and the moon had only a tiny strip of sky on the south to traverse. And I said to her—to the girl—that it must be very late.

"'Yes,' she replied, 'we shall soon be going to bed . . .'

"I don't know why, when she went into her room, she left open the door which faced mine, and which too was open. I felt her undressing there. The whole house was silent. Everybody was asleep. And not a sound from her either, from Rechammah. They were moments of magical silence. One could have heard a fly move. But after a time she came to her door, quite undressed, barefoot even, but wrapped in a quilt moulded to her plump figure, and her hair hanging loose like whip-cords down her white neck and high bosom. She smiled sweetly, beautifully at me, with a pleading glance from under her brows; and bidding me 'Good night,' she shut her door. I became confused, and started to rail at myself because when she had left her door open, when we came in, she had gone in first, probably expecting me to follow her, and sit there with her half an hour or so. But I didn't

have to rail long. Next day she herself asked me to go for a walk with her in the forest. And there, among the trees, she said to me, for the first time, with her head sunk :

" ' I had no idea that you are so shy, that you are so distant to a girl . . . ' "

" I was filled with terrible happiness. My heart wanted to fly out with joy, at hearing such beautiful, frank words. But I was not able to do anything, not even to answer her a word. I only suppressed my joy, kept it down, lest it jump too high. . . . After that, we went walking together every day, and forgot ourselves in the forest for hours.

" Once, when we were deep in the forest, under the shade of a tree, she put her hand on my shoulder, and a minute later she swooned with her head on my shoulder. There was a hammer banging in my head. And I sat there, downcast, confused, and terrified, not daring to stir. Afterwards she got up, seemed to stare into vacancy, there was something cold about her, and somehow, she was not very happy.

" At night, when I lay on my bed, my head throbbed. On our way home she seemed to be wrapped up in her own thoughts ; she had not looked at me once all the way.

" But the next day she went out with me again, and I forgot all that I had been thinking during the night.

" So it went on all through the summer. And when I left the town, she saw me off, alone, to the riverside, so that even her parents should not know. . . .

" I don't know what happened to me. She kissed me, and I was again like stone, just like that time in the forest ; and I didn't even give her a kiss in return.

" Yet I am not so sentimental," my friend suddenly cried out, and his forehead wrinkled, like the surface of a pool when the weather is bad. " Only I was intoxicated ; that is what you might call intoxicated ! "

He was lost in thought for a while, and a melancholy smile wreathed his face, contorting his lips a little, and he went on :

" But how beautiful was her farewell to me ! How beautifully she stood there on the bank, with her eyes turned on my ship, which was already gliding with me on board far away, down the stream. And as I stood there on deck, she waved her white handkerchief to me . . . "

I saw that his eyes were becoming bloodshot ; and I got up from the bed, and told him that I must go now.

"Of course," he muttered suddenly, as though he had not heard me. "Do you know . . ." and he jumped up from the bed, and fixed his eyes on my face, almost staring through me, "that ■ just what I want her to know. That I have not ceased to hope . . . and that . . . I am absolutely convinced of her loyalty to me. . . . Did you hear !"

And with one bound he was at the bookcase, as if a sudden burst of energy had shaken him up.

I saw him light the lamp, and as the match flared up between his fingers, casting a sudden red glow all over the room, he looked curiously untamed and tempestuous, with the light on his shaggy head.

I said good night to him, and went home.

■ was a gloomy night, and I felt very lonely. Except for the lamp burning on my table, and the shadow of my own head on the wall, I had no joy in the whole world. It seemed to me that everything had died to me. Such profound dejection had my friend cast on me. And it seemed to me more than ever that every human being was an isolated, hacked-off lump of anguish. My head throbbed so terribly that, involuntarily, I sighed : "Embittered, lonely people !" ■ seemed to me that the world could never again know any happiness. Even where two people love each other, I had seen on their faces an endless, inexhaustible pain. I had seen two such people stand night after night, for hours, without stirring from the spot ; without speaking a word ; their eyes looked as if they were straying far away, and their pallid faces were as though by enchantment turned to stone.

My head was in a whirl that night with all the thoughts that kept flying through my brain. And when I went to sleep, I no longer knew whether I was still alive. I turned my face to the wall and lay there with my eyes closed, half awake, completely lost in hideous thoughts that filled my head, and seemed to stun me, so that I fell into a swooning doze. I was not aware when at last I fell asleep.

But suddenly I heard, not clearly, but penetrating through my sleep, the voices of two people, approaching my door, very much

engrossed in their talk, as though some great event had just occurred, and immediately after there came a knock at my door, and I jumped out of bed.

"Who is that?" I cried. And when I unchained my door, two friends of mine stood there.

"Are you asleep already?" they asked, looking round with a sort of wandering stare, blinking their eyes in the light.

"Yes, I was asleep," I said, looking involuntarily to the lamp still burning, just as it was before I fell off to sleep.

"Solomon has been drowned."

"Solomon?"

And as though that were not the main thing, I asked again:

"Have you found out when it happened?"

"To-night."

I stood motionless for a while, till I felt the cold penetrating me as I stood there undressed, and as I went back to bed, I asked again:

"How did it happen?"

My friends stood round my bed, and told me:

He was very happy this evening, and he went and took out a boat in the park. There were still a great many young men and girls on the water when he went out. But afterwards it got quieter. He still stayed in his boat, keeping always to one side, near the bridge, where the lake is at its deepest, and joins the other water across the bridge. And there, we don't know how, it happened—whether the boat rocked, or he bent down carelessly, and fell out of the boat. . . . Nothing might have been known of the accident, if the man who hires out the boats hadn't noticed when his hour was up, that he did not return, and went in search of him. He found the empty boat, near the bank. It had probably been cast on shore by the waves. A man's hat was on the other bank, and the oars had floated far away. Boats went out immediately with lighted lanterns, and they dragged him out. He was already yellow; his head hung limp, and water and froth poured from his mouth.

My eyes seemed to turn into my head, listening to the narration. My friends grew silent as death. One of them fell into deep thought, his head sunk half in shadow; the other had his eyes fixed in a rigid stare on the flame of the lamp.

Finally, they awoke out of their immobility:

"What would be the time now?"

"Just two."

They left my room, each with a sigh, and I was left alone.

Now I felt an emptiness, like a blast of wind, blowing through the whole room.

I crouched up; and I don't know myself how I spent the rest of that night. I felt as if a heavy curtain had descended between me and the world; and that I was lying buried, like a tiny little worm, somewhere in a vast darkness; and that far, far away, there was a world where terrible mysteries were being spun. . . .

## THE RETURN HOME

By JONAH ROSENFELD

*Translated by* JOSEPH LEFTWICH

Jonah Rosenfeld, born 1882 in the village of Tchartorisk, in the Province of Volhynia, Ukraine. His father was a teacher. Attended Chedar till twelve. Both his parents died in his thirteenth year and his elder brothers in Odessa apprenticed him there as a joiner. For about ten years he worked at the trade, reading nothing, and making no attempt to write. He was twenty-three before literature made any appeal to him. His first sketch, about life among the joiners, appeared in 1904. He rapidly became one of the best-known Yiddish authors, devoting himself almost immediately, from 1905, entirely to literature. His collected works appeared in 1909, and another edition in 1912. He has written a great deal of the life of the Jewish working class. Was the first to introduce into Yiddish literature abnormal mentalities, and has made a special study of the effect of fear and horror on the human mind, using it in a variety of ways in a large number of tales. Regarded as one of the most important narrative writers in Yiddish.

THE railway-station with the roof gone—just a skeleton, with window holes—and all about, piles of stones—first greetings of the destruction. By the skeleton of the railway-station, a wooden hut newly-erected and strange to me . . . a couple of railway-servants, a lot of soldiers ; all standing about in groups, their clothes unbuttoned and loose. Here and there soldiers shaving their comrades, hand mirrors, razors and scissors gleaming in their hands. Little groups of them squatting on the ground, their legs tucked under them, some playing cards, others eating, or drinking tea out of various kinds of vessels. Elsewhere there is a sale going on of chains twisted out of the hair of horses' tails, and rings fashioned out of shells and bits of guns—"souvenirs of the war." In another corner, among the tumult and chaos, several soldiers stand round two Magyar prisoners, chattering in their strange language, which none of the Russians understand ; and just because they cannot understand a word of what is being said, they stay rooted there, amused by the gibberish of the foreigners.

Soldiers' atmosphere. The air is soaked with soldiers' sweat and foulness . . . The whole place looks like a great barracks, a barracks without roof or walls, only a cemented floor . . . I feel lonely and uncomfortable . . . The familiar neighbourhood stares at me dumbly . . . quivering ; well-known sights gaze at me and greet me hushed and immovable.

I am silent and afraid of my silence . . . I wish I were invisible, so that I should not be seen . . . A gigantic gendarme with long bushy moustaches stares at me . . . Not wishing to give him the trouble of coming to me, I walk up to him.

"I am a native of Tchartorisk and am now on my way there," I tell him. "I have come down specially to look at my ruined home."

He measures me up and down with a cold gloomy stare, and fixes me with a curious glance full of tyrannical cold-bloodedness. . . .

"Have you a permit ? " he asks.

I show him my papers, but his expression does not change . . . My heart begins to sink. He is looking such a long time at the papers.

"I have heard that my town is completely destroyed." I venture.

"Your permit extends only to Rafalovka——" he replies.

"Well, what of that ? " I ask.

He puts the paper into his capacious pocket and walks away silently . . . I follow him and speak to his shoulders, to his unconcerned broad shoulders . . . I explain to them that I got the permit only as far as Rafalovka because I am registered on my passport as a native of Rafalovka, but actually I am a native of Tchartorisk. I was born and bred in Tchartorisk.

The shoulders remain silent, and the spurs jingle . . . So I run to his side and whisper into his ear :

"Your Excellency ! "

He is unmoved, as if made of stone . . . His eyes are dull, like those of a dead fish . . . I shiver. . . .

"You mean, your Excellency, that I had no right to come to Tchartorisk . . . Very well, if your Excellency will give me back my permit I will return."

He makes no answer ; his expression does not change. He is indifferent to me and to what I am saying. . . .

"Your Excellency ! "

He clangs his spurs with decision . . . He has made up his mind about me and my permit. . . .

"Yes," I say, "your Excellency ■ right. It was really foolish of me to come to Tchartoriak with a permit extending only to Rafalovka. I did ask them to give me a permit to Tchartoriak——"

I speak to him as to a friend of mine. My teeth are chattering. But I speak to him with an assumed easy familiarity, to hide from him the fact that I know that there is something terrible in store for me . . . One of the soldiers notices me following about behind the gendarme and looks after me with pity . . .

"The devil brought me here," I say to the soldier. "You understand, my friend, I am a native, according ■ my passport, of Rafalovka, and I have been fool enough to poke my head into Tchartoriak——"

The kind-hearted soldier looks at me with pity, as if he already sees what is going to happen to me.

The gigantic gendarme goes into the little hut, and I get the impression that it has swallowed up something greater than itself. I stop behind the door. I stand there feeling terribly lonely. The whole neighbourhood looks at me mournfully, as if it is all over with me. I feel that loneliness which is felt by one condemned to death, when he finds himself among thousands of people . . . and it is strange, but I am smiling . . . I feel myself smiling . . . I think it may help me if I keep a smiling face, and yet I do not know in what way it will help me, and go on smiling all the same.

Three gendarmes come out of the hut, all of them tall and broad-shouldered, with bushy moustaches and spurs on their boots . . . The first (the one who has conducted me here) goes off—goes past me, ■ if he does not see me at all, although he almost touches me as he goes. It is as if he wants to convey to me that he has already forgotten me and all about me ; that he has handed over the matter to others, and that it is no longer his concern. He goes away, not as if he has anywhere else to go, but because he has nothing more to do here . . . He has done everything in that hut that there was to be done by him. The other two gendarmes remain standing near me and begin to argue among themselves which of them shall lead me away (I know not where). ■ is decided at last, and the one whose duty it becomes says :

"Let him go to the devil ! . . . Why should I be troubled with him ? Isn't there enough ground here ? . . . Come !"

I feel that I have ceased to exist . . . I have become a something which has eyes and feet, and I feel that everything is being pumped out of me . . . I follow him for a little distance and suddenly see a familiar form. A little while after, I recognise by his shoulder and the profile of his face, the police inspector of Tchartorisk. . . .

"Your Excellency Zvetovsky !" I cry.

He does not recognise me.

"Your Excellency Zvetovsky !——"

At last he recognises me, and I am so overjoyed that I begin to laugh and chatter foolishness.

"What were they going to do with me ?" I ask him, when my conductor has left us alone.

"That which is done in such cases with everyone——"

I should have been taken to headquarters and should never again have seen the light of day.

I ask him whether I am safe now. He assures me that I am, and I ask him for permission to visit my home, for which purpose I have come here.

He gives me the necessary permit and I thank him earnestly for it. I salute him as I go, and when I am a little way off, I stop and raise my hat to him again.

The field is densely overgrown, overgrown with wildness, overgrown with emptiness, a field as if before creation—as if it had never known the plough . . . The late summer sun gleams down on the desolation, shines down on and begilds the chaos . . . a chaos of prickly, withered plants, which sparkle against the sun like embodied rays stuck in the ground . . . The desolation of the steppes, the wildness of the steppes . . . It seems as if a chunk off a planet had fallen down from somewhere, had been torn off from earth and heaven and lay there unknown to man and beast . . . like a woman forsaken by her husband, deserted and lonely. . . .

My gaze wanders about horizontally among horizontal emptiness. I walk further ahead, sometimes by the beaten road, often away from it. Everywhere the desolation of earth, the sadness of earth. In places, hollows and bits of iron begin to show ; there ■ broken glass lying among the grass, mingled with sand and coils of wire, twisted like chains ; the trees are hacked about and

charred at the roots, the branches are blackened, arms outstretched pointing to the blackness and the desolation of earth.

On one side, adjoining a narrow overgrown path leading from one ruined spot to the other, I see a little mound rising up, surmounted by a cross . . . a grave isolated and lonely, far from the dead, far from the living . . . Of the earth and in the earth, and yet something by itself, cut off from the earth, marked and measured off to a certain length. . . .

"Christian!" I cry "Are you more comfortable with your cross? It is no more than a silent witness to your Christian faith. What more? Who brought you here and buried you? . . . Christian! A Jew is standing beside you and pities you . . . I feel like weeping on your grave, but the cross keeps me back . . . If it were not for your cross I should feel much more at home with you. But I say **■** you with the whole of my heart and with anguish: 'Christian! You have been forgotten!'—"

Farther on, the farther I go, I see such mounds rising more often; I see great hollows everywhere, long and twisted, innumerable patches interwoven with barbed wire, looking from a distance like long white fantastic eels. At every step I take, there are bits of cloth from torn tunics, big pieces and little pieces, and quite large pieces, even whole tunics, without a tear in them . . . Bits of exploded bombs and hand grenades looking like nut-shells and whole coils of barbed wire lie about, covered with hard prickly vegetation . . . The whole field looks as if the Lord had spewed all over it bits of iron and wire . . . Empty tin boxes which once contained preserved food are scattered about the ground, the green glass of broken bottles gleams all over the place, and near them are lumps of filthy wadding stained with iodine. Near by there is a crushed cap without a peak, and a peak without a cap, and bits of military clothing, the collar of a tunic, a shirt-sleeve, the nail-studded heel of a boot and such-like things, as if they had been deposited by a hurricane or had been left by a score of ships which had foundered here, or were the remains of a wild demoniac feast in which thousands of fiends had taken part . . . a devil dance, a devil wind. Sunshine and graves, and I . . . I in the midst of it all like a strayed soul, like the spirit of the chaos . . . My body is full of the perspiration of dread, full of the desolation and woefulness of the fields . . . Thousands of shrill notes are struggling and trying to tear themselves out of my heart and soul: "My

dear beloved field ! Mother of Eternity, Heart of Nature, a true child of yours has come back to you from a far strange place, a child of yours is here, one who was nurtured on your lap and marked you with his little childish feet . . . I have come here to absorb your sadness and woe . . . You are forsaken, hated and spat upon, you lie here like an old whore, mother of mine, torn and broken and covered in rags . . . ”

Silently, slowly the vegetation stirs in the wind, wild growths spring up from the desolation, grown from themselves and for themselves. They wave like the hair on the head of a corpse in the open air . . . They tell of vast tracts of land laid waste, they tell of chaos and sadness . . . Lying among it all, ■ a piece of land covered with corn, From a distance it looks like a faded strip of ground. I go up to it, touch an ear of corn, and brown withered grain rolls out. The ears wave slowly in the wind, with a kind of dried strawy rustling noise. They hang their heads as if they had been gibbeted and sway dismally in the wind . . .

The farther I go, the more it seems to me that I am entering deeper into the chaos, leaving what is and approaching nothing. I go on and on walking upon desolation wrapped in silence and in heavy sorrow—upon a large piece of forsaken earth . . . From time to time there rises a hill, hardly recognisable as such ; and now I stop beside a great living tree covered with tiny leaves and tiny pears, little green pears looking like leaves, leaves looking like pears : hard to tell which is which . . . A wild tree, an old tree, always wild, always youthfully covered with leaf-children and pear-children, everything hard and prickly, everything green, never ripening.

I stand a long time in the shadow under this tree and pluck the pears together with their stalks and leaves . . . Smooth, fresh and cooling . . . I look at them, touch them, stroke them lovingly, kiss them, and feel my hot tears falling on them. I fill all my pockets with pears, leaves and stalks. I take a step forward, and then I stop short again, filled with pain and longing :

“ Tree !—” I cry.

Out of dense desolation, silence suddenly comes to life winged in the form of a crow . . . It whistles softly like the soul of the steppes . . . The blackness and the sorrow of a vast desolated tract. It flies low, very low and bears with it the secrets of the dead. The very way in which it flies tells of piles of dead lying

somewhere between heaven and earth, scattered over the vast extent of the steppes . . . It settles on the skeleton of a horse, on which there are still bits of flesh, and begins leisurely and deliberately to pick them off . . . Then it rises and flies off again, with robberlike quietness, stealthily, silently . . . Remembering well where the corpses lie, it wings its way along, alighting now here, now there, missing no carcasses on its way . . . I sit down to rest on the yellow sand which looks like maize-flour. The sand once indicated the road between the village and the town. Now it leads from one waste to another. Nothing has changed. The same sand and the little bridge with the same narrow stream running with the same force out of the woods along the fields as it did years ago. The water runs rapidly as if it were running a continual errand . . . running from wood to field, from field to wood, bringing them greetings from each other, messages of tremendous importance out of the depths of the wood, out of the broad fields, telling the mystery of life, of eternity . . . Here and there, all along the sand, are clumps of dwarfed fir trees, the same that stood there ever since I remember. "Welcome to you, my dear dwarfs!" I cry "May you live for ever, and may for ever live your mother-sand——"

I go onward, bowed down under the wide-stretching sorrow. The farther I go, the more I see signs of the sadness and the desolation . . . Here and there are whole nets of barbed wire. There is a familiar clump of trees; no fence round it, no tombstones there . . . a swollen piece of earth . . . I stumble on among branches and trees, among dense foliage, twisted and tangled, and I search for a mound, a fence, a grave. There is no sign of anything—a smooth piece of ploughed earth and no more. Here and there are broken bits of stone, single letters graved on them, black and gilt letters which once formed part of tombstone inscriptions. They tell of a second death, of names for ever forgotten, names erased, torn out by the roots, buried in oblivion . . . Letters big as the eyes of a world of people who have been buried twice and yet refuse to be forgotten . . . There are no graves.

Vanished for ever are the places where my father's and mother's bones rested—I am bereaved again, doubly an orphan . . . There is no burying-place . . . It has buried itself among the bones of the dead . . . There are pits and trees, and near them the white

bones still lying on the earth . . . There ■ a skull with long teeth and big eye-sockets. . . .

One mound of stones after another ; mounds overgrown with wild vegetation, almost as tall as I am, and there are trees, more trees than there appeared to be in the days when there were still houses near by . . . Many of them with their trunks and branches charred and blackened, gleaming against the sun until they look as if they were wrapped in black satin. . . .

Desolate stillness . . . The stillness of a wide desolate tract. The earth is covered with woe ; the mounds are like wounds grown over with wild hair.

As a lover cannot recognise his loved one after death, so I had not recognised my beloved little town . . . It lay there bloated and overgrown . . . A great fat corpse . . . Why are the trees wrapped in mourning ? What gigantic orphans they are ! . . .

Stiff and frozen, the trees stand in silent respect, mourning for mother earth who has—died !

The black branches point outward as if they are saying : “ Dead ! ” And the silence ■ shrieking : “ Desolate ! ”

By scores of death a living settlement has died, in hundreds of silences it now lies brooding, sunk in its own desolation. And frozen and dumb are the trees of a large tract of earth which has been cut off from the rest of the world and laid waste.

“ Living trees ! ” I cry. “ Bury your mother earth ! ”

The charred trees send back the glowing rays of the sun . . . Sun glitter and the glitter of sorrow are together and yet apart . . . The sun glows and radiates blackness, shimmers and sparkles in a shower of blackness and of light at the same time, as if eternal life and eternal death were celebrating a joint jubilation, or as if thousands of perished souls hunted and driven forth were wandering about seeking peace.

I gaze upon the desolation silently and sadly . . . How everything is staring at me ! It seems as if I have lived an eternity, as if I have gone through an age-long process of decay, as if I am the living spirit of this great desolated region, and am wandering about here like a soul upon the grave of its body . . . In memory I see one house after another, one room after the other, but where are they now ? . . .

I can't fix my mind on it ; all the paths are overgrown, all the winding ways are covered, only the main road still remains, but even this is hard to recognise. It has become broader, more sandy ; it is like a ploughed-up field, cut about by wheel ruts and full of hoof-marks and hollows.

A sandy road—no town, no people, no horses or carts . . . Ploughed up by the coming and going of strangers who knew nothing of the town and the neighbourhood, and who left it so that those who did know, should never recognise it again . . . With fire and sword they had laid waste the town, dug up the earth, bespewed it with iron and brass, and left it—left a ploughed field, and broken trees, trees charred at the roots. . . .

"Tchartorisk !" I say, "I cannot recognise you !"

I go stumbling on, crawling among wild prickly vegetation, from one mound to another. The whole place is covered with wild pears, little clumps of bushes, three feet high, which tear at my clothes as I go—they stand above the ruins and the desolation, in the places where the houses once stood, where the town had once been. Only the great church still stands. There are no crosses left on it, and it is full of holes which from a distance look like gaping wounds that have dried. The gigantic century-old trees surrounding it have remained too, each branch looking like a great tree. . . Several of them have holes right through them, others are charred and burnt, many of the branches hang down like broken limbs. Wounds everywhere . . . pieces of wood on the ground. The stone fence round the church has gone, the ground is littered with bits of bricks and stones, with masonry three hundred years old . . . The inside of the church is in ruins . . . Empty walls ; the windows are holes . . . The doors are open—wide-open. They cannot be closed, there are no doors and no windows left—everything is open to the sun, to the street, the stones and the three hundred year old masonry . . . I look up at the great cupola—gigantic cracks and holes—wounds everywhere—no holiness, no profanity, only emptiness and ruins. . . .

"Church," I cry, "do you know where my two Synagogues once stood ?" I gaze up at the church with respect, with affection, with amazement at its strength. So much of it is in ruins, and yet nothing is ruined. Inside nothing has remained, and yet all has remained. The walls and the church have remained.

Wonderful strength, wonderful power. . . .

I leave the church and go farther, stumbling over the places where houses had once stood. There are signs of burning, remains of a great desolation, much obliterated by rain and time. Bits of lead and iron are scattered about, overgrown with grass and thistles. . . .

Over my head floats a great spider-thread like an extinguished sun-ray which cannot return to the skies, yet cannot fall to earth. It glides along like a snake in the air . . . darts its head here, its tail there as if it had lost something, were seeking something, and suddenly it plunges among a clump of trees and clutches a branch.

I go up, and see trees covered with apples and pears, bored through by the beaks of birds. The juice runs from them like the milk from the breast of a dead mother. . . .

Prehistoric life—a time when trees live and bear fruits without cultivation, and let them hang and rot and fall to the ground to make a sudden sound in the stillness . . . And birds sing on them, on apples and pears, head to head as if they had both grown together out of the branch. . . .

Among the trees I see the spider-web, large and round like a table-cloth. Right in the centre stands a spider as big as a frog, with great great paws. He sees me and starts to run. The whole web quivers, but he soon stops, not quite sure whether to run or not. The paws stare, the paws ponder and every movement says :

“ Silent ! Dead ! Desolate ! ”

Symbol of desolation, black soul of havoc. . . .

My Tchortorisk !

I run taking no heed of the way, and it seems to me as if there runs after me the whole sorrow of earth and the chaos that was before creation.

I run back, leaving behind me a twilight-east and going to meet the dawn in the west . . . In the distance, the rays of the sun strike the trees with the silent sound of decay, and they bathe in the charred trees, which have been stripped of their skins, of their barks, and are black as death.

I run across the empty fields through a sea of wild vegetation, among graves and hollows. And it seems to me that the dead have run out of their graves . . . and that they have chased the living and all life away from the town, my town, away from my fields, and have made it all one great graveyard.

## CITIZEN WOLI BRENNER

By DAVID BERGELSON

*Translated by* JOSEPH LEFTWICH

David Bergelson, born 1884, at Uman, in the province of Kiev, in the Ukraine. His father was a Hassid, a profound Jewish scholar, and the rich man of the town and district. Their home was a centre for all the better-class Jews in the entire district. Bergelson began writing when he was very young, at first in Russian, then in Hebrew. His first Hebrew story sent in 1906 to the "Hazman" where David Frishman was editor, was rejected. This also happened the following year with his first Yiddish story, sent to the Kiev daily "Dos Folk." This went on for some time, a number of his stories that afterwards became famous being steadily rejected though he asked for no payment for them. While studying at Kiev University in 1908, he started his famous novel "Around the Railway Station," which he had to publish at his own expense. It created a stir, appreciative articles by men of importance in Yiddish literature appearing in many papers. One of the greatest prose writers in Yiddish. His novel "After Ail" is by many considered the peak of achievement in Yiddish literature.

After the Russian revolution was one of the founders and leaders of the big Yiddish cultural movement directed by the Kiev Yiddish Culture League. Went through the revolutions, the civil war and the Ukrainian pogroms. Described the Jewish massacres and destruction in a series of novels. Lived in Berlin for several years from 1922. Had certain disagreements with conditions in Soviet Russia, but afterwards publicly declared that he had been in the wrong, and returned to Soviet Russia in 1931.

EARLY every Sunday morning, as regularly as clockwork, the forest-broker, Woli Brenner, comes to Moscow by the crowded mail-train.

"Did you ever!" he marvels to himself, looking as if he had travelling fever. "Well—ll—ll! How do you do, Moscow!"

Goodhumouredly, as if he owned the place, he takes his bag down from the rack, and leaves the compartment. "Now, now, now," he smiles at the people blocking the gangway, "there's plenty of time, plenty of time."

There is a crush round the long train. The platform is littered with luggage and baggage that keep tripping you up. The shouting of the travellers and of the milk-sellers mingles with the frightened squawking of hens and ducks that have lain since midnight under the seats, pecking away and clucking. Heavy, hurrying top-boots don't look whither and on to what they are striding.

"Say, uncle!" someone bawls, "you haven't half a heavy foot!"

But Woli Brenner has long been accustomed to all this, and it does not rouse any feeling of protest in him, as would, for instance, rain or snow. Almost every face here seems familiar to him.

"So long!" he cries to the guard, waving his hand to him from a distance—"so long, comrade!"

And he strides away on foot from the station.

He is a medium-sized, sturdily-built Jew in his sixties. His trim little greyish beard—the beard of a man who was once blonde and handsome—simply begs to be parted, half to the right, half to the left. On his left cheek, just by the tiny wart, he has a dimple, a relic of his youth—which always helps him to make friends easily with utter strangers. He wears a cap on his head, like all Soviet people, only he wears it tilted jauntily, like a gay, young fellow. His face is always ready to smile, always to show that there is already a tooth missing in front. His leather travelling-bag smells of egg-beigel, like in the old days when he was half a forest-dealer and half a forest-broker. He himself reeks of a packed, all-night railway carriage, sitting up with head propped in a corner, dozing. But inside, in himself, he is every-day-like and cheerful.

"Lum-te-deri-tom, lam-te-deri-tom," it sings inside him.

All around the windows are tardily, lazily greying. The night still snuggles against the fronts of the houses in the streets. A solitary drosky, if it happens to pass down the street, makes a clattering noise with its wheels, as if to wake itself up. Here and there, by the light of red and green fires, the tramlines are being relaid and the road repaved. Woli Brenner watches the work with the expert air of one who belongs, and as he passes he is ready to smile and show that there is already a tooth missing in front.

"That's right . . . I have put my Friday night into the pool, so

you put in your Sunday. . . . That's right, comrades—partnership is partnership."

He has been travelling about like this for the last three years. Every Monday he gets his orders to select material in the forests round Moscow, and every Sunday morning he comes back to Moscow, to spend the day with his children. He has three of them, splendid ones, his second wife's, who is dead. Gusta, Lottie and Polly.

"Three, bless them!" he calls them in his mind.

The two older ones are typists. The third is learning to be one.

When he comes home in the dawn to his house in the little street near the Trubne Square, they are all three still asleep. In the dark passage against the half-lifted curtain he sees damp enamel basins, tall blue jugs, wet pieces of scented soap and other signs that they were up late last night, enjoying themselves, washing their hair, and their youthful beautiful bodies. He looks at the evidence with a smile in his eyes for a bit. His right hand is ready to part the beard to the right and the left. His nose wants to snort with delight. His mouth wants to laugh and show the gap in his teeth in front.

"That's right! Excellent workers!"

On the plain wood chest, beside the enamel basin he observes a tiny coil of hair. He cannot take his eyes off it. He picks it up, examines it, and sniffs at it.

"Lottie's hair." He has recognised it by the black colour, with the scarcely perceptible tinge of red in it.

"Never mind! She's got a good head of hair. It doesn't matter how much she pulls out combing it. There will always be enough left for two others. She's a fine strong girl."

Then he hangs up his coat, has a wash quietly, and silently opens the door into the room. His nose is immediately assailed by a warm, pleasant odour, like the odour in a moderately-heated orangery, where only the rarest and choicest growths are trained.

"Sleeping for all they're worth," he says with a wink and a smile, showing the tip of his tongue. "They are radiant even in sleep."

The room is square, a large room, a Moscow room for three girls, whose father comes to stay with them every Sunday. Three big windows hung with white lace curtains which the girls themselves wash and iron. At the far end, behind a tapestry ■ the

couch, spread with white bedding and a warm blanket, waiting like that all night for him, for the father.

On both beds and on the couch sleep three mature girls, with a difference of about eighteen months between each of them—three beautiful young girls hiding their lovely slim bodies under the blankets.

There is on each bed a gleam of hair, loosened on white pillows, sweetly-reddened cheeks, glimpses of bare shoulders and backs, a tangle of slender bare arms, and a young mouth, which is in sleep half open and seeks in sleep to kiss someone—Polly's captivating mouth.

Woli Brenner stands still a while and looks at the good things he has, with the eyes of a Jewess whose Sabbath loaves have come up well. His eyes are filled both with amazement and with a smile.

"Gusta—oh, lies there like a Queen."

He can't take his eyes off her.

"A statue! Look at her! Look at her! Her bare arm flung over the blanket . . . as if intentionally. Look at her throat—marble! Look at her little chin! Isn't she beautiful!"

The only thing she lacks in his opinion is a crown on her head. Though what does she need a crown for? She is herself a crown!

Lottie will never do anything in the same way as Gusta. Not even fast asleep at night. . . . Look at her! Lottie lies on her stomach. . . . Her hands stretched out on the pillow, as if she were swimming, and her face is twisted round, as if to show off: "I'm a good swimmer, eh?"

She is in every way different from the older sister, not only in her features, but in every respect—Gusta blonde, Lottie a gypsy, like her mother, peace to her. The older a kind of Abishag, the Shunamite. This one, a youthful, fiery Bathsheba. Very much in love with herself, has a high opinion of herself. Has not even set eyes on jewellery all her life, yet if she dresses up, it is as if she were wearing a row of golden snakes coiled round her arms and round her throat. Her eyes are neither blue nor grey, yet somehow both intensely blue and grey, and, most important of all, penetrating like ninety per cent. proof spirit.

Once when he, her father, had come to see her in the office where she works as a typist, he found the place in an uproar. Somebody, a very big pot, had come running in from another office loaded with papers which had to be copied out very quickly.

He came bustling in, shouting "at once!" Lottie, who was busy typing something else, just looked at him, and he stood speechless for a moment, and then he started telling everybody again how important it was that his papers must be copied at once, but he no longer made a noise about it. He spoke quietly, like a human being.

And the third, the baby . . .

Woli Brenner stands looking at her, sleeping on the couch in the middle of the room.

"It's still a kitten . . . only seventeen and a half . . . still growing. Full of sap. Not finished yet. All curled up. But see how she smiles even with her eyes shut, and her lips seek even in sleep to give somebody a kiss. Look! Watch her lips! Who knows what she is dreaming about!"

Lottie suddenly turns over on her back. The blanket slips down, falls on the floor, and reveals nude parts of a glorious girlish body, glowing with the abandonment of night. Woli Brenner hurriedly picks up the blanket with his head averted. He covers his daughter and recalls as he does so the passage in the Bible: "And their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness."

He undresses, draws the blanket over himself, and luxuriates after having knocked about a whole week, in this beautiful white bed that his children have arranged for him.

"Lovely!" he yawns, relaxing—"this is what you call the pleasures of this world, the pleasures of this world."

He scratches his beard and thinks of various things.

"I'm all right," he ponders. "I'm provided for. I'm settled, I am."

And he wonders how it is that he is never bored, particularly these last years.

"Once upon a time," he reflects, "one had to take down a book to get rid of a feeling of ennui. But since the Revolution and the Soviet regime life has become so all-round interesting that it is possible to manage by reading a newspaper, and sometimes one can do without even that. You watch what is happening in the country, and in the world, and it provides sufficient food for thought.

"As a result of the Revolution and the Soviet regime"—he feels like hugging himself—"we have become to the whole world

like a room with a passage. We've got a finger in the pie everywhere—China to-day, Nicaragua to-morrow."

"Clever Dick, you!" he says to himself again, feeling like hugging himself. "Did you ever know before the Revolution that there is a friend of yours somewhere called Nicaragua? Ni-ca-ra-gu-a. An Aramaic word. You couldn't even have pronounced it in those days. . . ."

He feels happy, and suddenly he reminds himself of the argument he had in the train coming down with a couple of chance acquaintances.

"Reb Woli Brenner," they said to him, indicating the landscape all around, "tell us the truth. Do you really hold with all this, or are you only pretending?"

"Pardon," he answered them. "To begin with, I am not Reb Woli Brenner, but Citizen Woli Brenner."

"And secondly," he answered them, "you are dolts. Why shouldn't I really hold with it? What was I before the Soviet regime? A petty trader—half forest dealer, half forest broker. Now I am, thank God, a partner in the whole Soviet scheme, a shareholder. And not only in the Soviet scheme. In the Comintern as well. Do you realise what a business that is? And what a business it is going to be? Wait! It is only just beginning to develop. You are all short-sighted, you are. You only think of counting up your immediate little gains. You want to be petty bourgeois. You don't even understand what a real big business is. While I know this much—I am a shareholder in all this—so are my children.

"Don't you see? Didn't the coal strike in England cost us enough? We sent the strikers part of our hard-earned money. My children and I. Believe me, it won't be lost. There will be profits on the deal. You'll see!"

"There you go again," they interrupted him. "We are asking you if you really mean it, and you go pulling our legs again."

"Dolts!" he answered. "You think it is leg-pulling. But to me it is a serious business. Is it my fault if your brains are incapable of grasping such things? You can't make it out. You need a teacher to explain it to you. And I have no time to do that. I'm a timber broker, I am."

Woli Brenner often gets into arguments like that in the train.

It happened last night, in the crowded mail train. The carriage was packed as if it was a holiday. They were all sitting on top of each other. He had felt drowsy, but a foreigner on the seat facing him had started a conversation. He was returning to Moscow after looking over a number of factories in the outskirts. A very important specialist, he seemed to be, though his nose was a trifle familiar. It turned out that he was a German Jew, and a very big "spez" indeed, an engineer, and an orthodox Jew at that . . . with a good knowledge of the sacred tongue, Hebrew.

"There are a great many Jews like me in Germany," he said.

"University graduates, who light candles on Friday nights."

"And I wouldn't stay here in the Soviet Union," he added.

"Why not?"

"Why not?" he answered. "This slaughtering business in a country with so much idealism. You shoot people down."

So Woli Brenner, sitting quite calmly in his seat, up and replied :

"You still light candles on Friday nights and you know a word of Hebrew, too"—here he suddenly remembered the high-faluting way Jews talk in Courland, the way Shomer used to write, and he continued : "Now if you will hearken to me—there was among us at one time a sage, who was known as Simeon Ben Shetah. And this Simeon Ben Shetah—so it is recorded—executed eighty women in Ashkelon. Whereupon the Talmud asks : 'We have been taught that you may execute the man, but not the woman.' And the Talmud answers : 'At a time of stress you may execute even women.' And here with us, I would have you know, it is a time of stress—do you comprehend me?—the whole of world capitalism is seeking to crush us. And in the second place, let me tell you, I, too, am a 'spez,' a timber broker, is what I am, and they don't shoot and they won't shoot me. Why? Because I don't do what the others did! . . . I am Citizen Woli Brenner."

Now, dropping off to sleep, he recalls how the German sat there in his seat, with a wise nose and a foolish face, and he regrets that he didn't hurl another text at him : "Let not a soul live," ■ says definitely in the Torah. So you see that even Moses couldn't build up anything without a death penalty.

"Pity," grumbles Woli Brenner, scratching his beard regretfully. "Ever such a pity!" I should have let fly that text at the German. It's a lovely text! What a pity! What a pity!"

## FROM MY ESTATES

By THE NISTOR

*Translated by* JOSEPH LEFTWICH

The Nistor (Pinchas Kahanovitch), born 1884, in Berditchev, in the Ukraine. One of the most original figures in Yiddish literature. Was given a good Jewish education, and was influenced by Hassidism. Has written a great many poems, ballads, children's stories, and translated Hans Andersen into Yiddish. After the revolution, during the Kiev period of Jewish cultural activity, David Bergelson and he were the chief representatives of Yiddish literature in the Ukraine. Left Russia for a time in 1920, and lived in Berlin for several years, but afterwards returned to Soviet Russia. Uses Yiddish folk-motifs very largely in his writings, and a simple, naïve style, with a somewhat twisted syntax at times. The collection of short stories, "From my Estates," from which this tale ■ taken was published by the Ukrainian State Publishing House in 1929.

I DON'T know where it came flying from, but suddenly, in the midst of everything, I felt on my forehead a wet mud-patch. I looked round. Who could it be, and who had thrown it? Saw nobody. And at once removed the mud-patch with my hand, and lo, a coin.

And as I had long been going about penniless, had not eaten, nor had a decent lodging, I wanted to have a good time now. So I went to a fine restaurant, had a meal, ate my fill, and then I went into the town for a stroll, with something still in my pocket for spending. And since a fine day it was, and I feeling pleased with myself, passing the splendid promenading place, and seeing tents and booths put up there, in which books were sold and many people, grown people and also children buying, because a cheap book-week had been proclaimed all over the country and books were being raffled in the booths, and each raffle, it was written down, must win, I also went up and drew a ticket, and when the salesman in the booth unfolded the ticket, he gave me a book.

The author, The Nistor !

The title—*The Writings of A Madman*. And on the cover the drawing of a pale lunatic wearing a strait-jacket.

I turned the pages and the book started like this.

The Nistor complained that he had ten bears boarding with him and eating his head off, eating him out of house and home. And when he had nothing left, not a cent, and he himself had to go begging in the houses, they still would not leave him alone. They kept coming to him, sat around his table, and everything ■ bought, that he had got together begging on the doorsteps of houses, they demanded, and he had to give it to them.

The last time he came home he found them round his table again—four on one side, and four on the other, and one at the head and one at the foot, the two oldest and most sedate. They were ■ silent, waiting, looking at him—and what they were waiting for was—food.

And when the Nistor showed them—let them see!—that there was nothing in the room, and he undid his wallet, and nothing there either, and the only cupboard standing open, and the shelves bare, and on the walls no raiment, and in the corners of the walls only spiders, and the spiders, too, dead or faint with hunger—they still kept silent.

And the Nistor thought to himself—what more could he show them that they should see that he had nothing—except his ten fingers—maybe! And he said so to them: "This ■ all I have and ■ I possess—no more. And do with me what you will." And the bears looked at his fingers, and acquiesced. Fingers are fingers, and fingers are food.

So the Nistor went up to the first bear, a little bear, and offered his little finger to chew. And he bit it off. He offered the next finger to the second. And he did the same. And so from one to the other along one side of the table. The Nistor already had no fingers left on one hand—instead of fingers blood and chewed bones. And the others were famished, waiting their turn, and licking their jaws very respectably.

The Nistor went over to the other side of the table, and offered the little finger of his other hand, and then the next, till he had only two fingers left, and two more bears to feed, a young bear along the side of the table, and the oldest bear, at the head.

The young bear had no patience, seeing all the others busy eating, their mouths full of blood and gristle, and his appetite

was roused, and he was full of desire. And when the Nistor went up to him and offered him his finger, he snapped at it and in his haste bit off both fingers at once. And the oldest and last of the bears was left without food, without a finger, and he sat there very annoyed, and very sedate, and waited. Of course, the Nistor would not let him go without anything. Why was he worse than the rest? On the contrary, he was the senior and deserved more.

And the Nistor stood there with two bleeding hands now, holding them up, and the blood was running into his sleeves, and the pain was intense, and what could he do with the blood, since he could not even put on a bandage, or tie a towel round.

Then the Nistor went up to the oldest of the bears and said: "Look, I haven't any more. And I can't do anything more. Even if I want to."

And when the bear heard this, he silently and sedately laid his paw on the Nistor's breast, and asked: "And this, what is this?"

"This?" answered the Nistor. "■ is nothing, a little watch, of no consequence. ■ goes wrong, and doesn't keep time properly."

"A watch is a watch," answered the bear, and did not take his paw off the breast. And the Nistor realised that it was all up, that he would have to part now with his breast and his heart, and then the spiders in the room, too, would have to die, and then he would not be able to go begging in the houses any more.

So he stood for a while and looked at the bear, and here his finger-pain became more intense, suffering not to be endured, and a great cry broke from him, but he kept it back; he did not want to disturb the feast of the other bears. And then, when they had all finished eating, and the oldest of the bears still kept his paw on his breast, and he was hungry for his portion, and waited for the Nistor's breast, the Nistor lifted up his voice and said:

"My lord bears. You demand from me the last I have, and if I give it to you, neither I nor you will have any more, and we must now bid each other farewell. And since you have seen me in my poverty and in my bitter plight, and in my wealth never, I want to tell you about that now, so that you will see how being rich, one can become poor. So why not being poor, again rich? And perhaps if you will now leave me this last that I have, who

knows but you would have no cause for regret afterwards, and maybe by not eating this once you would afterwards be rewarded with many rich feasts ?

" My fingers which you have chewed up hurt, and the bones which are now being digested in your bellies have left me blood-burning wounds, and there is a cry sticking in my throat, and it is only for the sake of your feast that I did not cry out, and a great cry is still in store for me, when my heart is taken out of me, and as much time as I am still destined to spend in company with it, I want to use in order to rejoice with it for the last time. So permit me this for the last time. And hear me speak of my riches.

" You must know that in the highest places I had my own ladder, and often I went up, and once I remained there for a long time. And up above, as down below, there are places of different kinds, beautiful and eerie, and also ugly and muddy. And as usual, I sated myself first with the beautiful, and spent much time there, and then I left them, and I crossed the frontiers and a filthy, squalid, muddy place I found myself in.

" A town was there, and the town was more than half sunk in mud, and the walls sullied, and whiteness and something not filthy was a novelty there. And people trudged along up to their ankles in mud, and the houses were mud, and the roofs were covered with mud, and when it rained and the roof-mud got wet the filth ran into the houses, and what happened then in the houses can be guessed, and how the people looked inside these filthy houses can be imagined. And like the people, so were their means of earning their living. And they baked bread of mud, and with unwashed hands they ate.

" Anyone who came to them as a guest from outside suffered, of course, starved, couldn't put a thing in his mouth, but in the end he could not hold out any more. He had to eat. He gave in and willy-nilly had to join in their filth-feasts. And I, too, when I came there from the lovely places, suffered intensely at first from hunger and from cold, because their food I could not eat, and their couches revolted me. But after some time had elapsed, and all my fine things and everything I had brought with me from those other places gave out, I had no choice but to yield, and whether I wished it, or didn't wish it (of course, I didn't), I had to break their filth-bread and dig my spoon into their dirt-plates.

" And I ate, and soon vomited it up, and I ate a second time, and I vomited again. And the filth-people were indignant. Why was I so fastidious—why could they eat it and others as well, even guests from outside got accustomed to it, and why was I better than everybody else !

" And they hated me. And when I became ill because of their food, and couldn't get up, nobody came to me, nobody brought me any different food, like for a sick person, nor even for one who is not sick. They forgot all about me, and did not bring me even their ordinary muck.

" And I became wasted, and nobody paid me the slightest attention. I just lay there and couldn't move. And when I once asked in my room for a drink, and a child in the room, if its parents had gone out, or an aged person left behind, handed me sometimes on my plea a little of their water, and the water, like their food, was black and filthy, and I sipped it, wanting to still my hurt and quench my thirst, I vomited the water, too, and with the water everything I had left, the very gall in me, and I became green, and shrieked as I vomited, and when the child that had brought me the drink, or the old man who had been left behind grew frightened and ran to call the people of the house, their own or relatives or neighbours, these for the most part took no notice, would not even listen, and even if they did, and even if they sometimes came and found me green, belching and faint, they used to stand and look at me and spit and ' a nuisance ' they would say, and ' who sent for him, who asked him to come here. Soon he will die and we shall have his body on our hands, and have to dig a grave for him—as if we hadn't anything else to do ! '

" Help, of course, they did not give me. Nor did they have anything with which to help me, since it seemed to be all my fault, because my stomach and my guts appeared to be different, and I was a stranger besides, and what, after all, was I there, and what claim had I on them, and why should I be a burden on them.

" As for getting well, I saw that among these dirt and filth-folk I should never get well, because food and remedies of dirt are neither food nor remedies. And I did not want to die among them. The thought that even after I was dead filthy people would lay me out with their filthy paws—though life there was uninviting—did not make death any more pleasant.

" And I strengthened myself, pulled myself together, and I got

out of my muck-bed, put on my bemired garments, and as best I could, without saying a word to anyone, without a farewell to anyone, I dragged myself to the door, crossed the threshold and went outside.

"The very thought that I was already outside made me feel well, and the hope that perhaps by exerting all my strength I would somehow be able to get out of this filth, gave me increased powers, and I strode forward through the mud.

"And the people of the house saw that, and when I got out of bed, and quietly, without a word of farewell, left them, and went out into the fresh air, and the air agreed with me, and my eyes sparkled with health, they scoffed and jeered at me, and they believed, they were sure that I would not be able to get as far as their frontier. Also they were annoyed with me, as I have said, for being fastidious. They hated me. 'Look!' they shouted. 'He is going away. He is leaving us. Our country doesn't suit him. Our mud is not to his liking. He ■ looking for fresh lands, the perisher ■ leaving us!'

"And some of them accompanied me with curses and with reviling, and others slung mud after me, first the children, and afterwards the fathers and the older folk. And the people got excited, and the people bent down to the ground, and picked up mud, and mud there was plenty, and how to handle mud these people knew well enough, and the people threw mud, and everything they threw stuck to me—first my back was plastered, then when I turned round to look at those who were slinging mud at me, I was covered with it in front, too, and my face as well, and my head, and the hair on my head, and I was wet and black all over, and heavy with the weight of the mud on me. And the mud kept flying at me, one lump after the other. The first I felt, but those that followed I ceased to feel, and muddied and beamirched, I just managed to get away from the pursuing, pelting mob.

"And with great difficulty and feeling very ill, I slogged for ever so long through the mud, and covered quite a distance, and many times I stopped in the midst of the mire to catch my breath, and many times I thought it was the end of me, that I should never get to my destination, and would leave my soul in the mud, till it was over, and I got out of there, and placed a wet foot on the dry frontier, and again came into a beautiful land.

"Soon the frontier people saw me, and they seemed very much

surprised, and they stared at me, with awe, with their eyes wide open, and I understood, and I explained their wonderment to myself, thinking that they stared at me because I was an object to be stared at, like a corpse that had arrived in a living land, or someone filthy and bedraggled who had come into a clean country, for I was ill, and surely there must be signs of something deathly on my face, and I was covered with mud, and these two things together, ill and filthy, had no doubt provoked their amazement.

"But when I looked again, I saw that more than wonder, there was awe in their eyes, that they kept aloof from me with tremendous deference, not as if a sick man, poor and mud-coated, had appeared to them, but one who is very wealthy, overwhelming them with his opulence, and they, the frontier-folk, and the inhabitants of that land had never seen anything like it, as ■ he were walking on gold, and as if he were hung with gold from head to foot.

"And, indeed, when I lifted up my hand and wanted ■ take the mud off my face, to get rid of some of the filth, and in this fair place make myself more fair, and I took off the first bit of dried caked mud, and held it in my hand, I saw in my hand not mud, but actually gold. Once I took off—a lump of gold, the second time—again gold. And when I looked at my mud-pelted garments and the whole of my body, I found myself all over shining, golden, as if encased in armour of gold.

"And clear it was to me why the frontier-folk paid me honour, and comprehensible also why they held aloof, full of deference and awe. And I saw myself terribly rich, and soon I felt myself strong, and since from the mud-folk I had come tired out by the journey, and ill, and famished, not having eaten for a long time, and as I looked round in that place, immediately, on the frontier, and saw shops with fine raiment, and all sorts of luxuries, I went at once into the first shop, and owner and assistants ran up to me and gave me what I desired.

"And when I wanted to pay with the caked mud that in my hands immediately turned to gold, and I gave the proprietor a gold coin, and wanted to take the goods, he would not allow me to. 'No,' he said to me, 'I must not do that.' His assistants would take everything home for me.

"And the proprietor asked me where I lived, the house where

I stayed, and I could go, and soon I would have everything brought to me at home.

"And I was not living anywhere, and had no place at all, so I stood there for a time embarrassed, and could give the proprietor no street, no number and no house.

"The proprietor saw my embarrassment, and asked me the reason. And I said :

" ' I am a stranger, and I am not living anywhere yet, and perhaps you could be good enough to tell me where I could get a room.'

" ' Certainly,' the proprietor hastened to answer, showing me every sign of courtesy and honour. And he at once sent out one of his assistants, who ran and immediately ordered a room for me in a hotel. And he came straight back, and the proprietor ordered him to take me to the hotel, and to be at my service, if I wanted anything else on the way, that I would like to purchase in other shops, and he would go with me, point out everything for me, and carry home for me all the other things I would buy.

"I thanked him and went out with the assistant, and wherever we went people stared after us, and wherever we turned people stopped their work, no matter what they were doing, and looked at us. And people came to the doors of the shops, and shopkeepers and assistants gazed at us with amazement, and from the houses, too, and the windows, people looked out, and the whole town, all the streets through which we went, had one subject and one thing only to do—to admire me clad in gold, and not to take eye off me or cease to talk about me.

"And the assistant went with me from shop to shop, and in all the shops we bought what I required and needed, and then the assistant took me to a hotel, the richest and cleanest, and the finest room was given to me, with all conveniences, with beautiful walls and great doors and tapestries and windows looking out into a lovely garden, and a strong, beautiful bed, and great comfort and excellent service. And many servants stood waiting to carry out my wishes, and everything I said was done at once.

"Presently I told everyone to go out and I got into bed and rested, and I had a doctor called, and the doctor came and examined me, and he found that there was no longer any illness in me. I was having good food, and the doctor prescribed in addition to the good food certain other good things, and his treatment was

right, and in a few days I had forgotten all that had happened before, the muddy place and the bad treatment I had there, and the mud with which they had pelted me, and my illness there, and what was left me of the mud was gold, and I am rich and honoured and in a beautiful spot, and in the most beautiful house of this beautiful spot, and the owner of the house in which I am staying keeps hovering around me, and servants walk on tip-toe in front of me, and what more could I desire ?

" And, indeed, as soon as I felt well I dressed and went out into the town, and the town knew me from before, and the townsfolk stared after me more than previously. And many interested people I saw, merchants, agents, and others who wanted to do business, who kept following me, wanted to propose something to me, but did not yet venture to approach, stared after me, watched where I went in, but kept their distance, did not yet dare to come up to me.

" But after a time, first one, and then another, and then many others came up to me. And soon I was surrounded by a crowd of merchants, agents, and people with business schemes, and each of them proposed something to me, or had something to sell.

" They persuaded me that there was a shortage of money in the country at present, and if I want a house I can have a house, if I want a shop I can have a shop, if I want a forest, if I want a field, I can have it all, and for next to nothing, and I must not let the opportunity slip, but let myself be persuaded.

" I allowed myself to be persuaded, for without business there would be nothing to do, no way of passing the time, and what was the use of walking about with the gold. What would be the use of it to me. While if I trade I lose nothing, on the contrary, I add to my usefulness. For I had made enquiries, and saw that the businesses that were suggested to me were really advantageous, and the country really experienced a crisis, as they had told me, and it could be exploited, so why not, and why should I decline.

" And I bought. If a house was offered I bought a house. If it was a shop, then it was a shop, if something else, it was something else ; and in a little while, when I looked round, and I went through the town, walking with my agents and business promoters, and they pointed out my possessions, the houses and the shops, I perceived that entire streets were already in my pocket. Also I had on me the contracts for a great number of shops, and I am the

boss, and I give order; and a large part of the town already belongs to me, and before long the whole town and everything in it will belong ■ me.

"And so it was. In a short time, the man who was above everybody else in the town came to me himself, the man who owned the land, the site on which the town stood, and said that he had heard that I am buying, and that I am not short of money, so perhaps I would buy the town from him; the land and the title-deeds, and all the buildings, and the open spaces, and everything all around, and the whole of the revenue would be mine.

"And I bought. And I became master of the town. And for a little while I was content with that, had sated my buying-lust. Then when the town ceased to be sufficient for me, and sitting about doing nothing was tedious, I left that place, the town, with everything I had bought, and went to another place, and there I did the same as in the first place, and I did that too in a third place, and so on and so on; I bought up everything, and my breast-pocket was bursting with papers, and my case kept getting more full of contracts.

"And in all places my name was great, and everywhere I was known and respected, and whole countries were at my service, and entire districts waited for my orders. And merchants and agents stood in queues at my door, waiting to hear me speak a word, and revenue from the entire country came flowing into my pocket, and all my desires were fulfilled, and the loveliest daughters of the land were waiting for me to delight them. ■ I but nodded, the best of them were at my disposal. If I beckoned, the finest robes fell off the most ravishing bodies. And my banquets and balls that I arranged were talked about and remembered months and years afterwards. And the rich wished they had my wealth, and the poor dreamed of me on their couches at night, and in their dreams they looked up at me as from the earth to heaven, and I stood over their heads like a great sun, and their eyes were too small to see, and their heads were not big enough to imagine such great good as mine.

"And I was not sated, and all the good things I had were not enough for me, and already seemed little to me, and all that I had did not satisfy me, and I wanted to be the ruler over the whole country and the whole kingdom.

"And one fine day I achieved that. The Lord of all, the

paramount ruler, whose word was law, once sent to me early in the morning one of his great officials, with his footstool for me, and the footstool looked like a crown, and it had a rest on which to place the feet, and the man offered it to me, and I placed my feet on it.

"And so there was nothing more to wish for, and no gold on my body was left, and the mud with which I had been pelted had by dint of long-in-riches-living and much washing been rubbed away, and left to me was only on my forehead a little gold, and a little mud-patch, which in spite of all the washings and soaps couldn't come off, and I picked at it with my fingers, and it was very hard—and then, when the man brought me the footstool, a little perspiration broke out on my forehead—I was so excited and surprised, and I put my hand to my forehead, and a lump of gold came off, a hardened lump, and when I saw it in my hand, I felt very jolly, and that gold seemed to me the best gold of all, and it was indeed the best gold. And I said to the man :

" ' I am arranging a ball, and let the ruler come and see that his footstool has come to rest under deserving and worthy feet, and his crown——'

" I did not finish, but I meant that his crown was on a head undeserving and little worthy.

" The man flushed red. But out of awe for me, and because his ruler had sent him on such an important mission to me, and the ruler himself had sent his footstool to me, he heard my insult to the crown and said nothing, but a little abashed for his lord, and also a little out of fear for me, he bowed his head.

" And the ball took place. The finest and largest halls were decorated, and all the loveliest flowers of the land were brought there, and all the most beautiful women filled the dance-halls and the tables. And servants handed round food on plates of gold—and there was plenty of everything, oysters from the sea, and birds from distant isles, and wines from the cellars of princes, and goblets from the biggest landowners, and the music was the most delightful, and birds and parrots with their cries, helped to drown the music.

" And dresses were seen there such as no eye could have previously imagined, and the tables took away the breath of even old and former kings. And the guests marvelled and gaped, and

no one was able to see all the wealth that was there, for wherever they looked they were unable to take their eyes off, they could not see enough of it. People walked about dazed. They looked at things without seeing them, and they did not know where to look first.

"The official had conveyed my wish, and the ruler came, and he, too, was amazed, and his eyes were lost. And the guests were so full of the splendours there, and the servants also, that no one even noticed him, save I alone, and I called him to the head of the hall, and seated him at my side.

"There was a chair there for him, but he hesitated to sit down on it, because though he was a ruler, his eyes had never seen anything like it. And when at last he obeyed me, and sat down, he soon jumped up again. The great joy and admiration all around him made him feel small and insignificant, and involuntarily his hands stretched up to his head, and he took off the crown, and placed it on my head, as the one truly entitled to it.

"And the rejoicing was intensified. And everybody was intoxicated and dizzy with happiness. And the music added to the noise, bodies soared on wings, and feet glided on air, and women did not feel their bodies, and men did not feel the women, the dance was so elevated and airy and joyous, that only music could keep time with it, and only women with young and beautifully-smelling blood could fit into the step.

"And here I started drinking. Without counting, and without any measure I drank, and a special servant stood at my right hand, and from a special flask he kept pouring out wine for me, and the wine, too, was of a special kind, and it knocked me on the head, and came down into my legs, and I felt hot all over. And the guests drank with me, and the eyes of all were full of wine, and my joy was above that of all of them, and of all the heads I was the crowned head, and all the women were for me.

"And there were many shut-off rooms in the halls, and if I ask and command, and the music plays, the most beautiful women would follow me submissively into the shut-off rooms, accompanied by the music and my riches. And I did not command, and I did not call any woman, because I could have them all, and call them all, and I only went on drinking, and the music deafened me, and the parrots shouted my head off.

"And then I shouted. And my shout rose above every other

sound, the noise of the guests, and of the music, and of the parrots, and I cried :

“ ‘ Let the Great Bear come down out of the star-constellation, and I shall dance a bear-dance with him.’ ”

“ And everybody was silent. And the music was hushed. And the parrots ceased their cries, and no one stirred, and the entire hall was petrified, and all eyes were turned to the door, and all saw the Great Bear come in.

“ And the Great Bear was very grave, as if he did not come willingly, and it seemed as if he had been called away from his work, or roused from sleep, and all the people who gazed at him were awed, and all stood silent, and all eyes were turned on him.

“ That annoyed me. It made me feel a bit angry. Why were they all looking at him, not at me ? I had called him, and he had come at my command. And my annoyance, and my haughtiness, and my pride and my superciliousness hurt my heart, and I cried out into the silence, in a loud voice to the Bear :

“ ‘ Now, hear and see, Star-Bear, I have bought up the whole of your kingdom ’ (and I pulled out the title-deeds from my breast-pocket, and brandished them in front of him). ‘ The ruler himself has abdicated his throne to me, and I have put on his crown. I am now the richest man in the land, and all the subjects of the land are here as my guests at this never-before-seen ball. I want to enjoy myself. I have exhausted and tired of all the joys this land can give me. One, one joy has been left—to dance with you here at my ball, in front of everybody, to the accompaniment of soft music.’ ”

“ And the Bear heard me out, and he came up submissively, and he entered silently into the centre of the ring formed by the people, and the ring was silent, and filled with awe, and I went up to him, into the centre. And we met there.

“ And I told the music to be silent. Only one violin should speak. And the violin spoke. And I went up to the Bear and embraced him, and we both danced, silently, as one dances with a bear. He stood on his hind legs, and his front paws he held on my shoulders, and his head was a little averted, and a quiet star appeared in his forehead, and the lights in the hall began to go out, and the people were in darkness, only I and the Bear in the centre, and the little star shone on us, and I led, and the Bear followed, in time to the music, slowly, and I began to sing :

" 'The Bear, the Bear. Oh, this is bliss. And I have nothing more than this. No place to which I now aspire. And nothing more that I desire.' "

" And the Bear danced with me, and the music softly accompanied us. And the people stood in a dark, congested mass, and, faintly shone upon, watched our steps.

" I felt happy. My head began to whirl with happiness, and I got happier as I danced. At first I led the Bear. But as we went on dancing, he took the lead. The people kept us in view, and the encircling darkness united us, and the little star shone on our union, and as I danced I shut my eyes, and my head fell on my shoulder, and soon I saw nothing. And as soon as I shut my eyes, I no longer knew what was happening to me. I only felt delirious joy, and there was supreme happiness in the dance.

" And suddenly the wine and my intoxicating megalomania rushed to my head, and I opened my eyes, and saw the star shine on me, and I dancing alone, arm-in-arm with the Bear, and I cried out again into the silence :

" 'Bear, Bear, I have bought up the whole of your kingdom ! And here I have the title-deeds !'

" And the Bear did not answer. He was as grave as before. And he went on leading me.

" Then suddenly the little star in the head of the Bear went out, and I could not see the Bear either, only I felt him holding me, and I felt his fur, and suddenly, instead of the ring, there was a big opening in the floor, a pit, an abyss, and I was standing on the very edge of it.

" And the Bear bent his mouth to my ear, and said to me :

" 'You mad fool, with your vast riches : So you have bought up my kingdom, and you boast about the title-deeds in your pocket. Down with you, and see if you can feed ten of my children, my earth-bears. Here is the pit, and here is the abyss, and here is the ladder up which you came. And now I'm going to give you a shove. Catch hold of the ladder, so that you don't fall down. I don't want you to get hurt or killed.'

" And the Bear shoved me, and I flew. I didn't manage to catch hold of the ladder, my hands had no grip in them. I went bouncing down, hitting the ladder, rung by rung. My body bumped against the rungs of the ladder. Like a wind I flew down, and as I flew I lost my senses.

"How I escaped breaking my neck on my way down I don't know. I only know that I hit bottom, and lay for a long time on the ground, feeling as if every bone in my body was broken.

"Some time seems to have passed; it was day now, and I had rested and recovered a little from my flying and falling, and I arose and stood up.

"And I started to walk. It was my land and my town, but people who met me did not seem to know me. They turned away from me, and some stared after me, and some lifted up their eyebrows, and some actually laughed in my face.

"I did not understand. My mind was still full of recent events—my riches, and the ball, the Bear, and my fall. And I was full of doubts. I wanted to convince myself, to remember, to make sure whether it was true or whether I had dreamt it all, and I lifted up my hand, with a gesture of helplessness, and also because there was perspiration on my brow. And my hand encountered something soft, and I unstuck it, and I looked at it, and I found there was a bit of mud in my hand, a vestige of my gold.

"And I still believed myself rich, as I used to be, so I went into a shop, full of assurance, and I asked for soap and washing accessories, various little things I had need of immediately, and they gave them to me. And when I had to pay, and pointed to my forehead, meaning to indicate that there was gold there, and that they should recognise me, know who I am and where I come from, and they would naturally trust me, they laughed at me, and the shopkeeper looked at me with an odd expression, and the assistants surrounded me like a madman. And one of them very gently took the things I had bought and which had already been wrapped up, out of my hands.

"I resisted. And I shouted at him and at all of them who were in the shop: 'What does this mean? Don't you know me? Can't you recognise me?' And they went on laughing at me, and said that they knew me well enough, and they showed me the door, and told me not to waste their time, because time was money.

"I was furious. And I shouted at them: 'Idiots! Fools!' And I put my hands in my pocket, and pulled out a pack of papers, the title-deeds to my properties, and I showed them. 'See, what a lot of property I own!'

"The shopkeeper and his assistants seemed indeed to have no time, for other customers had come into the shop and were waiting to be served, and my shouting caused a lot of people to collect outside the shop. I was really holding up the business. And one of the young men went up to the door, and out into the street, and called a policeman, and the policeman came into the shop, and took me by the arm, and put me outside. But I didn't want to go. I struggled and screamed, and a big crowd collected. And the policeman got hold of me by the scruff of the neck. And he was strong and I was weak, so I had no choice but to allow him to lead me away.

"He took me to the police station and I spent the night in the cell, and in the morning, when the police saw that I was quiet, they thought that I wouldn't behave like that any more, that I wouldn't pester any more shopkeepers, so they let me go.

"But since I had no home, nowhere to go to, no place to spend the night, and nothing else that human beings require, the same thing happened over again. I was again in a shop, and made my purchases again, and again I wanted to pay in the same way, and again I was treated like a madman, my coins were laughed at, and my assurances did not suffice.

"I flew into a temper, and the end of it was in the second shop as in the first, that a policeman came to assist the shopkeeper and his assistants, and I was taken away—again to the police station.

"It happened several times like that. At first the people did not know me sufficiently. I used to go into a shop, and they treated me at first like any other customer. But afterwards when this had happened two or three times, and crowds had collected, not only the owner of the particular shop in which I happened to be, and his assistants, but all the assistants in all the shops in the whole of the street rushed up and kicked me out; as soon as I showed myself at the door of any shop, they came up to me at once and drove me away.

"I was known not only to the shops, but also to the small boys, who used to collect round me as soon as they saw me in the street. 'Look!' they cried. 'There he goes, the man from heaven, the multi-millionaire.' And 'Hi!' they shouted. 'What have you been buying now? Show us your title-deeds.'

"Sometimes ■ annoyed me, and sometimes it didn't annoy me, and I pretended to take no notice. But sometimes I had to

take refuge in a courtyard or hide in a passage, for if I didn't, after the shouting a stone sometimes came hurtling at me, and sometimes a lot of stones. And once I got a nasty knock, and I couldn't stand it any longer, and I jumped on the stone-thrower, and I nearly throttled him. And a crowd collected, and when they saw how I was avenging myself, mercilessly, some tried to rescue him, but they got something to remember me by as well ; a great many of them got badly hurt, and the blood simply poured down them.

" And when people saw this they said one to another, and then they all shouted it to everybody else :

" ' Why do we allow this to go on ? He's mad. He's capable of murdering somebody. We must have him put away.'

" And there were some daring spirits among them who took the risk and came up to me, pinned down my arms. I struggled, and I foamed ■ the mouth, and they got some rope and trussed me up, and one policeman, and a second came running up, and they brought an ambulance, put me on it, and took me away where people like that are taken.

" They took me to a room, and slung me inside, trussed up as I was. And the floor of the room was of stone, the windows had bars, and the door was of iron. I was left there alone for a time and no one came to me. Then at last a man came in, a tall-burly fellow with a bull neck, and a red face. He carried some kind of garment in his hand, like a shirt, and he came up to me and undid the robe, and at first he tried to induce me with kindness to put on the shirt, speaking kindly to me, asking me who I was and where I came from. And I, seeing his size and his strength, wanted to answer him nastily, and I said : ' I come from above, and I have got a lot of estates up there, and in one of them I keep a dog like you.'

" ' Like who ? '

" ' Like you,' I said, looking him straight in the eyes. And the man was, as I have said, very strong, and he drove his hefty fist into my face, and punched me on the nose, and bunged up my eyes, and I was knocked out.

" And then he did something else to me, but I wasn't aware of anything at all just then. I don't know whether he went on punching me, whether he kicked me, or whether he just left me alone. It was all one to me. I don't remember a thing. I only

recollect that after a time I woke up as ■ from a severe illness, and I felt no anger, I had no estates, and I had no regrets that I had lost my estates.

"I found myself in a quiet place, all alone, in a house with other quiet people. I was provided with everything, with a shirt, a long, linen, patient's overall, and with food and drink, and plenty of rest, too much rest. And the other inmates of the house never disturbed anyone else. Nobody got into anyone else's way. Everybody lived a sequestered life, and retained of his past life only vague memories.

"And some, who, like me, remembered the blows we got from the keeper in the beginning, had already forgiven him, and bore him no grudge and no enmity. But others, whose anger lingered, and the keeper hit them often and long, they no longer remembered the blows, but they carried the marks, some on their faces, but mostly on their bodies. And if ever they saw a reflection of themselves in a window, or a glass door, they stopped, surprised, looked at the reflection as if they did not recognise themselves, and asked others who passed—'Did they know whose reflection it was, so terribly mutilated?' And some had no answer and kept quiet. And those who did know said it was the keeper, and the mutilated people, looking at the reflection of their injuries, listened quietly, and they, too, were not angry with the keeper, and accepted the answer quietly, as if it were only natural, and of no special interest.

"So we lived, and in each of our heads it was quiet as after a storm. And our movements, too, were quiet, and none of us had any relations with the rest, and we did not form any association, nor any groups, but each was taken up with himself, segregated, only with his quietened head and his extinguished thoughts.

"I do not remember how long I stayed there like that, alone, extinguished, with those extinguished people. I only remember that once I found two of them sitting on my bed, and we got into conversation, and we discovered a close and common language, and the language opened us, and we had an understanding ear for each other's words.

"One of them was silent and a hoarder and grudged to use, and kept under his pillow food and all sorts of things, the hat off his head, the socks off his feet, the shirt off his back. And another, a poet apparently, also stuck everything under the

pillow, for he was constantly fasting, and always kept something at hand to eat when the fast was over.

"The hoarder was unshorn, and the hair of his beard and on his head was hard, stiff and bristly, and the whites of his eyes were bigger than the pupils. And the poet, too, was unshorn, but his hair was soft, and blonde, and his beard was curled, and his pupils took up the whole of his eyes, leaving very little space for the whites.

"And when we got talking, they asked me why I had nothing under my pillow, and I answered that it was taken away from me, and as for saving, it was out of the question, because I gave away the very food out of my mouth and often I didn't have enough to eat myself, and I had to buy additional food, and pawn the few things that were still left to me.

"And when they asked me how that was, who took it away from me, and whom did I give it to, I told them where I came from, and all the things that had happened to me, and about my fortune, and they listened to me, and sympathised with me, and they were very much interested in my tale.

"It was evening then, and on the window facing my bed the night had already descended, and I told them how I had grown rich out of mud and dirt, and how my riches had again become dirt, and at the end of my riches I had danced all by myself with the Great Bear out of the stellar system, and at the beginning of my poverty I was beaten in the madhouse by the keeper, and as a result of those blows my head is now empty, and I go about inside my head, as through immense chambers, and I am all alone there, and I light a lot of candles, and the chambers become kingdoms, and the kingdoms enormous, and everywhere lighted candles, set at great distances, all over the earth, all in candlesticks, and I keep going all round them, lighting and putting them out, serving them. Mostly I keep them all burning at the same time, and it is lovely and warm, a bright holiday, and the air ■ still, and the candlesticks stand up, and the candles splutter and flicker, and I am the master and servant both, and my cheeks are red with the glow of the candles, and I feel well and at peace, and very happy sauntering among all my bright lights.

"Once I went far away, ever so far, among avenues of lighted candles, and I came to a palace, tall and turreted, and white stairs leading up to it, so I walked up to the door, and ■ seemed

as if ■ were specially there for me, and the door opened by itself, and when I entered I found myself again in a huge room, and in the room there was a table, and sitting round the table ten bears on ten chairs, quiet and restful, as if they were waiting for me, and I when I came in, they greeted me very nicely, and then they waited a bit. There was nothing on the table, and no one serving there, the tablecloth was clean and nothing on it. And I felt that they were waiting for me to serve them and to put something on the table.

■ And here I had nothing, and was far from home, and nowhere to bring anything from. So I said to the bears :

“ ‘ You see, bears. I am indeed master here, and all the kingdoms are mine, but apart from candles and candlesticks, I have nothing, so how can I offer you anything ? ’ ”

“ But the bears took no notice. The bears were hungry, and they went on waiting. And they looked ■ the walls, as much as to say : ‘ You have got a palace, and kingdoms of light. Sell the candles, sell the candlesticks, and buy bread for us bears to eat. ’ ”

“ I was embarrassed, and did not know what to do, and what to reply to the bears. But after I had stood there for some time, and the bears still waiting, I had to go up to my candles and candlesticks, and I had to put out some of them, and I felt ashamed looking at the rest. But I took the candlesticks whose lights I had snuffed, and shoved them under my coat, and stole out. And I felt all the other candles and candlesticks staring at my back. And I went into a market place, and approached people, and asked them to buy, or if they would not buy, at least to lend me some money on them.

“ And that, I told my bedfellows, is what I am doing ever so long—pawning them. A good many I have sold, and many more I have left as pledges, as hostages in alien and unworthy hands. And my avenues of light keep diminishing in number, and my kingdoms are growing dark. And everybody knows me by now. Everybody knows me and my candlesticks, in every street and every market-place. And people don't want any more. The market is flooded with them.

“ ‘ And now I have come back from my bears, and I have got another couple of candlesticks with me, and I can't find a purchaser. And the bears are waiting. The bears are probably ravenous by now. Perhaps, friends, you will buy this time, ’ I

said, turning to the two sitting with unshorn hair and beards on my bed.

" They both jumped up at once, both anxious to buy. ' Produce the goods,' they said, and they would look at them, and they would certainly buy. So I stretched my hand out towards the window, and pointed to the night outside, and there was a brass bit of moon in the sky, and I said :

" ' That ■ one brass candlestick. And there is one of silver, too. Only the moon has got the silver one hidden away under his coat.'

" And they were both agreeable, and both of them bought from me. One bought the moon, and went away and brought me from under his pillow stale bread and rolls. And the other bought the sun, the silver one, which the moon had hidden under his coat. And he brought me something as well. And (you probably remember it, bears) I brought it to you, and you ate it up, and you were satisfied. And so was I, because you were satisfied. And you went away. And then you came back again.

" And there was another sitting held on my bed, and I told my bedfellows again that the bears are now frequent visitors, and my avenues are half extinguished, and ever so many candlesticks are missing, and that I walk among them, and feel very sad, because I see that I am losing everything, that soon I shall cease to be master and even servant, because there are no more candles, and the candlesticks are disappearing, and soon there will be nothing left to light and extinguish, and the cold keeps blowing between the empty spaces, and my cheeks are chill always, and even near the light I freeze.

" And when I go walking sometimes in the avenues, I no longer come upon a palace, but a little wooden hut, and when I climb the wooden stairs, they give under my feet, and when I ■ inside I find an ordinary room, a rickety table, and a dirty table-cloth, and the bears sit and wait, but they no longer treat me with respect, and they look at me demandingly, and when I point to the walls, and show them that I have nothing, and I tell them that my road along the avenues this time was in darkness, that I have sold or pawned everything I had, and there is nothing more, and I can't get anything more, they won't listen, and they point to my head and the hair on my head, and it isn't their affair, they say. I've still got a head, so I can think of something, and, if not, I should

give them my head and the hair on my head. Bears don't mind. They are not fastidious. Food is food.

"So I felt perplexed. I stood there and didn't know what to do. The best candlesticks are already sold, and those that have remained are only little ones, toy candlesticks for children to play with. No one will buy them if I took such to market. But here—I said to my bedfellows—here I have brought them along for you, and since you know me, and we live together, and we have concluded a bond of comradeship, perhaps you will buy again, as you did the first time. I hope you will not refuse.

"And, indeed, my bedfellows did not refuse this time, either. Only they asked me to show them my little candlesticks, which I had said were only toys, playthings for children. And since it was now night, like the first time we had discussed this matter, sitting together on my bed, and our window was already dark, and, in the sky there were only little buttons to be seen, I extended my hand towards those buttons, and indicated that they were mine.

"And my bed-fellows were agreeable this time, too, and they bought, and they went to their own beds, and gave me their leavings, bread, hard crusts, and I stuffed my coat full of it, and ran off to you bears, right away with the whole lot, and fed you. And I thought that would finish it. You see that I have no more and I possess no more, and my comrades have done me this last kindness, and more such favours I cannot demand from them—they have purchased from me the last paltry little candlesticks I had left, that nobody else would have bought from me. 'Look,' I said to you bears, 'it was very humiliating and annoying to have to worry my comrades to induce them to buy things they did not need (something entirely contrary to my character), and the result is that I have lost all my hair, and now I am quite bald. And if you come here again, I shall really not be able to do anything more for you. Unless, unless, my ten fingers. Perhaps that.

"And you bears devoured the crusts, and as you ate, you half heard me, and half didn't hear me, and you finished eating, and went away. And for a time you left me alone, and for a time I thought you would not come to worry me any more, so that I need not worry other people.

"I was poor, terribly poor at that time, and my bright kingdoms

were in total darkness, and when I walked through them I felt like in a cemetery. There was no vestige left of my beautiful big candlesticks. And of the little puny ones, too, there were only a few left. And the candles which I had stuck in them were tiny, and the flames were paltry, and they gave very little light, only they flickered and spluttered.

"I felt like a gravedigger, walking around there, and dead sorrow rested on my head, and my avenues were in darkness, and the roads were black, and I stumbled as I went, and I probably looked daft. I no longer believed in my road, and I did not think to find a palace there.

"And, indeed, the last time I wandered around there, I only knocked into a little ramshackle hovel, with a roof on top of my head, and the entrance three steps down underground, and I walked down, and came to a dark and filthy door.

"And when I went inside I couldn't see anything for some time. The ceiling was black, the walls sloping, oozing and black, and flies on the walls, a host of them, thin and dried up, and the spiders in the corners also thin and dead, because there were no flies crawling around for them to catch. And as I got accustomed to the dim light, I saw a table in the middle of the room, narrow and rather longish, and I saw you bears sitting round it, huddled against each other, and your eyes, too, gleamed with hunger.

"And you all turned your eyes on me, and demanded from me food. And I had nothing at all, not even any hair on my head, and you looked at my body, as much as to say—'If there isn't anything else you wouldn't make a bad meal yourself.'

"And I complained to you, and showed you the room and the walls and the spiders in the corners. 'Look,' I said, 'even the spiders are dead, and what can I do, and what is it in my power to do. My kingdom is extinguished, and my world is dark, and I myself am in a madhouse, and I don't get enough food, and the keeper is always in a temper. So what more can I do, and what more have I save only my fingers?'

"And you bears chewed up my fingers. My ten fingers would have sufficed for the ten of you, only the ninth of you snapped off the tenth finger as well, so there was nothing left for the tenth, and he saw my breast, and my heart, and he won't listen to reason, but insists that he is hungry, and I must give him my heart.

"And more than one I have not got, and then you will have

nothing either. So remember, bears. I begged you to give me this hearing, and that is why I have told you this tale, so that you should realise that this is really the end. Only one hope is left to me—my bedfellows, and though they, too, are poor, and they have already given me all they had, yet I shall not hold back, I shall go to them again, and try once more, and perhaps they will dig up something else, or get something from somebody else, but let me go now, and trust me, and I shall speak to them, and you wait here a bit, and perhaps I shall be able to get some more from them.

“And if you are afraid, and if you think I shan’t get anything from my friends, leave me for a while, and perhaps I shall in time get out of the madhouse, and who can say, perhaps I shall be lucky, and again find the ladder and climb up into the kingdom of mud and there become rich again, and again buy a lot of things, and we shall have banquets and balls, and I won’t let myself be hurled down from the heights any more. Perhaps——”

And here, the Nistor concludes, the bears were persuaded by his plan, and the tenth bear, the hungry one, forgave him that his belly was empty, and let him go to the madhouse, and quietly and furtively he called together his comrades, and told them the whole story, and asked them to advise him about the bears, what he should do if they came again. This time he had bought them off with a tale. But he would not be able to do that again.

And truly his comrades realised the Nistor’s plight, and more help they could not give him, and more to sell the Nistor did not have, and the comrades had no more to buy with. And they consulted long, examined every possibility, and it was agreed (there was no other way out) that the Nistor should write it all down for the doctor of the madhouse, and complain to him about his uninvited visitors and their too-frequent visits. And that was the decision, and that was how it was left, and the Nistor wrote it down. And since he had no more fingers, he described the whole story to the doctor in great smears of blood. And he is waiting for an answer from the doctor.

Yes, and he still has his heart. As long as he keeps well—if only he keeps well. Till the doctor’s answer comes he will probably have to wait a long time.

## SALT FOR THE SOUL

*By MOYSHEH OYVED*

Moyshch Oyved (Edward Good) born in 1885, in Skampa, Poland. Came to England in 1903. A jeweller in the West End of London. His writings, he says, are inspired mainly by Jewels and Judaism. "Antiques are my livelihood, but I spend myself on writing." A quaint, naïve, pawky writer, with a gift of real folk idiom.

Books : "Out of Chaos," 1918 ; "Songs of Life," 1924 ; "Visions and Jewels," 1925 ; "Gems and Life," 1927.

ONCE upon a time there lived in a little village in Poland a beautiful, rich and pious girl.

The story is already getting interesting. Isn't that so ?

She was an only child, and had been brought up pampered, petted and spoiled, like a princess of bygone days.

Her parents actually kept a foreign governess for her until she was eighteen years of age, almost down to the day on which she was married.

The governess taught her all sorts of languages, French grammar, and how to recite without the book, so that she might be able to entertain company.

The governess stopped up her ears when the thunder was crashing, and bandaged her eyes when the lightning was flashing, so that she might never be frightened.

And when the white snow of the village was turned to slush, the governess carried her pick-a-back, lest—God forbid !—she might freeze the tips of her tiny little warm toes, which were hidden in thick, pure woollen stockings, creaking little boots, and shiny goloashes with aristocratic points.

It happened after she was married that on a bleak, unfortunate night, a big fire broke out in the little village ; and she and her family were left pitifully poor.

And when the morning star arose, it saw nothing but a heap of grey ashes, and black charred embers—all so very grey and black that even the midday sun could not gild them.

Days after she searched in the ruin of grey ashes and found an

heirloom—a solitary solitaire diamond ring of hers—a spark in the ring which the fire-night had refused to consume. It had not had the heart to do such a horrid thing !

But all her other heirlooms and possessions were destroyed. And she fretted herself every much. And day by day she grew thinner and more emaciated with grieving. And the ring grew too big for her wasted finger.

She took the ring to a goldsmith, that he might make it smaller. And he made it smaller. And at the same time he stole the diamond out of it, and put a piece of glass in its place.

At first she thought that her poverty and suffering had taken the brilliance from before her eyes. She believed that the glass was her own diamond, but that she did not recognise it. When she became convinced that the goldsmith had robbed her, she talked to him about it. But he denied all knowledge—even that he had ever repaired the ring at all.

It hurt her exceedingly that a man whom she had trusted should have committed such a wrong. And she prayed to the Almighty God that He might change the false conscience of the goldsmith, and put into his heart an honest conscience, so that he might become a good man.

A short while after this, God presented her with something which was worth more than a diamond. And what is worth more than a diamond ? Naturally not a little girl, but a little boy.

And when the boy was still a tiny little mite, still slept in a little cradle, his mother told him how she had been grieved and robbed after the great fire. And she showed him her ring, with its rubbed-away, dull piece of glass. And she told him he must never do such a degrading thing, if ever he became a goldsmith, and that he must always be a good and honest child, whatever he become.

And the child grew, and out-grew his cradle. But he never took his eyes off the bit of glass. He hated the false drop from the first moment he saw it, whenever and wherever he saw it.

And he thought within himself :

“ When I grow as big as my mother is now, and as rich as my grandfather was once, I will steal out of my bed in the middle of the night, take the false stone out of my mother's ring, and set a diamond in its place—a diamond which will glow like the candles at the Feast of Lights.

"And I will put the ring back, so that no one shall know. And when my mother wakes up she will rub her eyes, and will not imagine for a moment that it was the goldsmith who had put back the diamond in her ring, nor that it was I who had done this. But she will think it is a sparkling dream, a shining miracle from heaven."

The child grew up, eventually the false drop became a bit of salt to his soul, and when he attained the age of eighteen he really did steal out of his home in the middle of the night. He ran away across the German dry land, and across the North Sea, and finally settled on a rich and free island.

He worked continually, hoped and saved up whole mountains of joys and dales of sorrows.

But he never forgot his mother who had been tricked, nor her false diamond, and man's glassy gods always stood before his eyes.

When with the help of Jehovah, the Almighty Inflictor and Saviour, he himself became a goldsmith, yea and a pensmith, he made for his mother a chased virgin-gold ring set with thirteen Brazilian brilliants, and he penned down a true Testament of Love, Justice and Beauty for all men to live by.

## HORSE THIEF

By J. OPATOSHU

*Translated by A. B. MAGIL*

Joseph Opatoshu, born 1887, in Mlawa, Poland. His father belonged to an old Hassidic family. Opatoshu attended a local Government school and, although he very seldom attended Cheder, his father taught him Jewish religious lore. At fourteen he was admitted to the Commercial School in Warsaw and subsequently attended the Polytechnic at Nancy in France. He went to America in 1907 where he completed his training as a civil engineer in 1914. His first story was published in 1910 and altogether he has had over 300 short stories published. His novel, "Polish Woods," written in 1915-19 and published simultaneously in Yiddish and Hebrew placed him in the front rank of Yiddish literature. "1863" is a historical novel of Jewish life in Poland. Both works have appeared in German, Polish, Russian and French translation. His collection of stories of the "Life of a Horse Thief" (from which Opatoshu has selected the following story), "The Underworld," containing stories of the underworld in Polish and American Jewry, and his "Race," descriptive of the racial clash in the American Melting Pot, are vivid tales of life in the raw. His collected works have been published in twelve volumes.

### I

MORNING. . . . Tirzeh cooked some schav, beat several eggs into it, boiled a pot of potatoes and put the food on the table to cool. She sat down and lost herself in thought: "Solomon ought to be back from prayers soon. Guess it's about time to wake Zanol. Runs around night after night, God only knows where."

Tirzeh looked at Zanol, who was sleeping near the door, his mop of hair sprawling over his gleaming forehead.

"Some young one I've raised! Strong as a bull. With such a son another mother would be delighted. And I? This very day—God forbid—they may catch him." She sighed disconsolately. "It's no easy matter taking fifty horses across the border. And who's to blame if not that fine father of his! Lord knows, I've rowed enough about it. Many's the time I've

said : ' Solomon, one horse-dealer in the family is enough. Let the boy learn a trade.' ' That was enough ! He'd just measure me off with that thief's eye of his and sing me a tune to bring my mother's milk back to me ! '

Tirzeh blew her nose in her apron.

" Never had any joy of my children. Had twelve and only three left. Zanol was always wild. Children never wanted to play with him—he beat them so. Hit even his own Rabbi. The neighbours said all along no good would come of him. Just think of it ! a child is born with a caul and an ungodly scream ! Who ever heard of such a thing ? And Sarah—doesn't she give me enough trouble ? Always bumming around somewhere . . . And every day there's some new scandal about her posted on the synagogue wall. Of course, we might marry her off before Hannah, even though she's younger. I only hope to God I have some joy of Hannah. . . . "

Zanol turned over and opened wide his blue eyes. He folded his arms under his head, stretched himself and yawned.

" Must be late ! "

He leaped out of bed, washed himself, put on his polished boots and combed his hair Polish style. He put his arms round his hips and began a dance, shouting :

" *Matko, podawaj !* (Mother, give me something to eat.) "

" You're worse than a goy," Tirzeh said. " When a goy gets up, the first thing he does is say his paternoster. And you ! "

" Not a word, mother," he laughed and, catching the barefoot Tirzeh in his arms, began dancing with her despite her struggles.

" Let go of me, you rascal ! Poison is what I'll give you ! "

Zanol roared. He poured out a glass of whisky and toasted it off, and then sat down to his bowl of schav and potatoes.

Solomon came in, carrying his talith-bag under his arm. He was on the point of saying something, but Tirzeh cut him short with : " A fine specimen you've made of your young saint ! Such blessings on all my enemies' heads ! He gets up like an animal, says not a word of prayers and gobbles up a bowl of potatoes and schav. You wouldn't listen to me, Solomon. So here you are ! "

Solomon's lips drew tight and he turned pale.

" Shut your mouth, you old talking-machine ! Who's asking you ! "

Zanvl kept on eating and smiled.

"A thief doesn't have to say prayers," he said.

Solomon didn't answer. He began walking up and down the room. He felt that Tirzeh was right, but to admit it was out of the question. And he loved Zanvl dearly and forgave him much.

"He'll get older," Solomon told himself, "and he'll change. I wasn't better myself when I was his age. And besides, Zanvl has strength and nerve, two qualities which every horse-thief ought to possess: they make his colleagues look up to him." For Solomon knew that ever since Zanvl had entered his "business," he was looked upon with different eyes.

"Saw Moses 'Kuniarsh' (Horse-Dealer) to-day," Solomon said.

"Well?"

"He'll be here soon. From the drift of his talk he seems to think he can bargain us down a few roubles. Says he can get it cheaper."

"Cheaper? The devil take him! If it's a penny less, dad, I don't stir from the spot. The old fox! I'll fix him some day."

"All right, all right. Stop hollering, he's coming," Solomon said quickly, and went to the door. A tall, thick-set Jew in a loose rep coat came in.

"Good morning."

"Good year, Reb Moses," Solomon replied and offered him a chair. "Here take a seat."

Moses let himself down slowly, groaning and panting. He took out cigars and passed them around.

"Well, Zanvl," Moses began with a cough, "are you ready to go to-night?"

"If we come to an agreement, I'm ready at any time."

"What do you mean? Why, I thought your father and I had settled it already."

"What's the use of beating around the bush, Reb Moses? Unless I see two hundred roubles on the table I don't stir from the spot. You say you can get it cheaper? You're welcome to it. I have nothing against you."

"Bah, Zanvl, you've a little too much pepper in you. You must be doing a flourishing business if you can toss away a hundred and fifty roubles like that. Be sensible for once. The entire

thing will take less than an hour, and a hundred and fifty roubles for an hour's work seems fine pay to me. Rothschild himself wouldn't turn it down. Come on, Zanol, don't make a fool of yourself. Now if I were certain that the horses would get across the border safely, fifty roubles more or less wouldn't matter. But what will I do if, God forbid, they capture the horses? Will you stand partner on the loss, ha? You don't answer. That's no way to do business, Zanol."

Zanol sat sulkily and said nothing. He knew that Moses would talk him into giving in, the old fox! Nearly all his horses are mine, he thought. Moses got them for a song. And now he wants to bate us down another fifty roubles. No!

Zanol stood up.

"Reb Moses, you're wasting your breath. It'll do you no good. I won't take less than two hundred roubles."

Moses looked straight into Zanol's eyes and smiled.

"Eh, Zanol, you seem to be getting rather excited. You and I, Solomon, will settle it between us. Meanwhile, let's have a drink."

Tirzeh brought some brandy and a little light food. With a groan Moses pulled out a thick wallet, counted out two hundred roubles and handed them to Solomon.

They drank each other's health.

## II

As Zanol approached the woods, he saw his father standing there with two youths. He quickly dismounted and began tying the horses one behind the other. This done, he said good-bye to his father and cautiously rode out of the woods, following narrow, winding by-paths, while the two youths rode behind him.

All along the way Zanol tried to think about the border. But the image of Rachel always interrupted his thoughts. "What if they shoot me to-night?" flashed across his mind.

He smiled broadly to himself and took out a small flat bottle of whisky from the leg of his boot. He pulled at it several times to drive the thought away.

Soon they came to the edge of the stream. "Halt!" Zanol called softly, raising his hand. They all stood still.

"We'll wait here till it gets real dark. Now, fellows, take

the bottle of whisky and rub it into the horses' heads to keep them from neighing. But do it quietly. Don't make a sound, understand ? "

The horses soon grew calmer as if they too sensed the danger. They crowded together with lowered heads and remained motionless. Zanzl looked at them standing there, body against body, with their lowered, pensive heads, and a sudden feeling of pity came over him.

All around was still. Now and then a breeze blew, bringing the wet, keen smell of juniper. Slowly, calmly, flowed the stream, its small dark-violet ripples rising and swallowing each other.

Zanzl lay on his belly, watching the dark blue mountains grow out of the water, spread their way into the sky. A reddish strip cut through them, leaving them hanging between water and sky.

Zanzl felt something pouring through all his limbs, filling him with wildness and life. The violet ripples seemed to call to him and he longed to throw off his clothes and leap into the water.

"Let's take a swim, fellows ! " he said, turning to the other two. They raised their heads, looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders as if to say, "He must be crazy with the heat."

Zanzl spat contemptuously into the water. "Quitters ! " he grunted and began swiftly to undress.

There was a splash as he went in. He swam around several times and came out. "Fools, you don't know a good thing when you see it," he said, and grasping a thick branch of an old tree, he began swinging himself up and down.

It grew darker and darker. The horses stood as motionless as if they had been hewn out of stone. Zanzl and the two youths doused them with cold water to rouse them, and the party moved on again quietly.

Silence. Only the rhythmic beating of the horses' hoots and an occasional neigh. A red light appeared in the distance. That marked the "chain." There, Zanzl knew, dangled a long chain from a high block of wood, white with black stripes.

Zanzl led the way into a side-path and they slowed down. He kept patting his stallion, and now and then treated him to a lump of sugar.

Footsteps. . . .

They halted and listened. Again silence and they moved on.

Zanvl looked around him. Another fifty paces and they would be in Prussia. Again they turned into a small sandy path and began driving the horses through prickly gooseberry bushes.

Two soldiers came out of a distant clump of trees. For a moment a quiver ran through Zanvl, but he pulled himself together at once and ordered the youths to whip the horses with all their might. The horses took fright. The youths jumped off and ran off. Zanvl was furious.

"Cowardly dogs! A plague on you!" he roared and rode to meet the soldiers. They stopped him and began untying the horses. Zanvl argued with them and tried to bribe them, but in vain. A cold sweat covered his body. He gritted his teeth. Suddenly he dug his spurs into his stallion as hard as he could. The horse leaped forward and with his forelegs threw down one of the soldiers. He galloped away, with the other horses following. The other soldier, frantic and confused, began shooting. Some of the horses were hit, plunged, and dropped. But the next minute Zanvl was on the other side of the border, thumbing his nose at the soldiers.

### III

Two Germans were waiting for him on the other side. One of them led the horses away, and the other asked Zanvl to have a glass of beer. Zanvl saw groups of people sitting on the grass near the saloon. He knew them as professional smugglers of secondhand clothes; they were waiting for the train from Berlin due at one in the morning, which brought the old-clothes dealers. The goods unpacked, each of the smugglers would don several garments and ride over into Poland.

A group of elderly Jews in long loose coats were sitting by, enjoying a quiet talk. They envied "Yeke Fool" (so they called the German) and his easy-going life, but most of all they envied the saloon-keeper, who ran the saloon on the highway and did a flourishing trade day and night. For the most part genteel but indigent Chassidim, they had tried all trades, even teaching children, and had failed at them all. Now they made their living wandering over from Prussia, each with three suits or their equivalent on his back.

In another group women in sheitels were gossiping indignantly about some Jewish girls who were sitting a little further on with a

group of Gentile boys and girls. The place where the young people were sitting rang with laughter. The boys stretched a girl out on the grass and began wagering that she was wearing nothing under her dress. After a while an old Jewess, unable to control herself any longer, came over and began railing at them. They let the girl go. An impudent young fellow jumped up gaily, hugged the old lady and tried to kiss her. She screamed, while everybody roared with laughter.

A German smoking a thick cigar sauntered by. He stopped and snarled: "Dirty Jews!" and went on.

Zanvl went into the saloon. He emptied several mugs of beer, smoked a cigar, said goodbye to the German and went out. The merchants with their bundles of clothes had already arrived and had spread out their merchandise in the middle of a field. The smugglers took off their clothes and stood there in undershirts and drawers, the women blouseless—all of them pushing, straining, to get to the merchants, with the stronger ones grabbing most of the clothes. The women fought with the girls and the girls tore off the sheitels from the women's heads. While they were struggling, a half-naked Gentile boy came over and slyly untied the string of a girl's petticoat. When the girl reached out to get hold of a jacket she found herself standing in a pair of short linen drawers. At which the young ruffians formed a circle and began dancing around her, refusing to let her out.

The "Jewish" guard came by with his gun on his shoulder, joking with the Jews and giving them advice. Soon a sturdy wench came over, took the guard's arm and went off with him in the woods.

A little distance off stood Zanvl, watching it all. He spat vehemently, flung the word "Stinkers!" into the night, and vanished into a side street.

He passed a group of smugglers with packs on their shoulders.

"Ho, Zanvl," cried out a yellow-faced man, "what are you doing here?"

"I had to see a German," replied Zanvl quietly and was walking on.

"Tell it to your granny, Zanvl. We know, all right," leered a small, broad-shouldered fellow.

"You louse! Who's asking you? Is it any of your business?" The smugglers glanced at each other uncertainly.

"Sure." The yellow-face turned to the little fellow. "Always poking your nose into everything. If he'd punched you in the jaw, do you think I'd have cared? Like hell! You'll put your foot in it one of these days. And you, Zanzl, why do you jump up in the air so quickly? Let the dog bark. Maybe you'd care to take along a package of silks?"

"Sure!" Zanzl said. "How much do I get?"

"Why, a ten-spot of course."

"Nix, brother. Fifteen."

The yellow-face thought for a while.

The smugglers put down their packs, while the yellow-face went off, to return after a few minutes with a large bundle of silks. Zanzl put the straps over his shoulders, lifted the bundle lightly on his back and set out. When they came near the border, they divided into two groups, the yellow-face leading. They took off their shoes, rolled up their trouser legs and waited. The yellow-face went into the woods to reconnoitre. Soon he returned accompanied by several soldiers, and at a given signal, the group went across the border. One by one they went through the woods. No one said a word; at the slightest sound they slid into the tall grain with their bundles, lay there a while until it was quiet again, and then went on.

Zanzl was tired. The day's activities had exhausted him and he felt all his limbs ache. He wanted to think of Rachel, but he could not collect his thoughts.

About three in the morning they arrived in the last village just outside the city. They rested their bundles on the ground and sat down to rest in a valley meadow. Suddenly there came the sound of hoofbeats. They grabbed their bundles and scattered in all directions. Zanzl ran away without his cap. Dizzy with fatigue he strode along as swiftly as he could. Shots rang through the air.

"They're chasing us!" Zanzl thought and stood still. Before him stretched the ancient graveyard. He climbed the fence and jumped light as a cat down on the other side. Calmly, quietly, he began to walk among the tombstones. He found a mound, put his bundle on the earth for a pillow, flung himself down and fell fast asleep. . . .

#### IV

From every part of Poland merchants and peasants thronged to

Loivitch, bringing their cattle, horses and swine. The narrow streets were impassable and the roads leading to the city were filled with *britzkas*. From afar ■ looked as if the city had been besieged by semi-savage foes, who had descended upon it with all their goods and possessions, barring all roads and storming with loud cries into the city.

Zanvl and his companions went out to the fair early in the morning. They wandered about, looking everything over, and late in the afternoon came to the horse market, which looked like a military camp preparing for departure. All around the market were wagons and *britzkas*, while the horses stood unharnessed between the shafts to allow the merchants to inspect them. In the middle of the market were a number of thoroughbreds and alongside stretched a runway on which their speed was being tested.

Zanvl strode through the market, casting glances all around, feeling at home among the horses. A young man came towards him with a basket of toy tin roosters, one of which he held in his mouth and blew. Zanvl bought a rooster and began walking about, crowing loudly. But he soon grew tired of this and threw the toy away.

A broad-shouldered, cross-eyed fellow wearing a cap with a split visor came ambling through the market, his hands thrust into his pockets. He seemed to be looking for someone.

"Well, I'll be damned! Look who's here! What are you doing here, Zanvl?"

"Yay!" Zanvl shouted and jumped at Kishke joyously. "I thought you were doing time behind 'the gates of mercy'!"

Kishke did not answer. He looked Zanvl's companions up and down, spat curtly and taking Zanvl by the arm, led him aside.

"Do you want to be in on something soft?" he asked.

"I'll say!"

"Well, listen," said Kishke in a low voice. "Just a little way from here there's a peasant with five colts that are beauties. If everything goes as it should, the mazuma will be in our pockets by ten to-night."

Zanvl called Gradul and Moshele and they began to work out a plan.

Alongside a *britzka* stood a young peasant tearing chunks from a loaf of bread under his arm and stuffing them into his mouth.

Behind him were five beautiful horses. Zanol brushed against the peasant as if by accident and stepped with all his might upon his foot. The peasant seized Zanol with both hands and flung him away. Zanol spat on his hands, clenched his fists and hurled himself at the fellow. One blow and the peasant lay stretched out. He tried to get up, but Zanol smashed him between the eyes and he rolled over.

Soon a crowd of peasants and Jews gathered from all sides. Cries rang through the air: "Kill the Jew! The unbelieving dog, kill him!"

Meanwhile Gradul and Kishke had untied the horses and led three of them unobtrusively away. The others Moshele guarded until after the fight, and when the peasants were on the point of making peace, he sent the horses galloping away. The peasants began chasing the runaways and Moshele and Zanol took the opportunity to beat a retreat.

## V

Night. A large room. Solomon "Kradnick" (Thief) took a loaded revolver out of a chest. He put several pairs of shoes into a bag and looked at the large clock on the wall.

"Hm, twelve. Another whole hour."

In bed, under the large down quilt, lay Tirzeh, snoring tumultuously.

"Blowing that old horn of hers!" Kradnik grunted and spat testily.

Solomon looked at his daughter Sarah, who lay on a sleeping-couch with her right eye open. "Other girls like her are mothers already," he sighed.

Solomon felt that he was to blame for Sarah's spinsterhood. He might have had a half dozen grandchildren.

"We've seen better times. A man earned his roubles easier than he does now. Matchmakers used to knock at the door constantly and young men would act as their own matchmakers. They were crazy about Sarah. And now?"

The mottled gander that slept under the stove suddenly awoke, stretched himself on his thin legs, and began beating his wings against the cage. He snatched some oat-grains with his beak and then stuck his head into a bowl of water. He stretched his neck, rolled his eyes, and swallowed deeply.

"Yes," thought Solomon, "if it please God that this business turn out successfully, then first of all a dowry for Sarah. It'll be a burden lifted from my mind. And after all, why should she wait any longer?"

Solomon opened his tobacco pouch and rolled himself a cigarette. He opened the door of the stove, shoved out a glowing coal, and lit the cigarette. He glanced at the window, blowing thick smoke through his mouth. The dark walls veiled in shadows filled him with melancholy. Outside the wind whistled. He shivered. It was cold.

He placed himself with his back against the warm stove and returned to his thoughts. His son Zavi was now on the road to the woods. If everything turned out as it should, they would cut through the woods, quietly lead out the two mares, walk them to the hill and—away to Moses Kuniarsh. That little job would bring in over two hundred roubles. The thought of the money put Solomon into better spirits.

"And on my word of honour, if with God's help I get the roubles, the first thing I'll do is marry off Sarah."

A smile lit up his face, and tears came into his grey eyes. He sat down, reached into the leg of his boot for the flat bottle of whisky, and took several pulls at it. He went to the cupboard and stopped his hunger with a piece of cheese.

Out on the street rose the long whistle of the night-watchman, then the howling of a homeless dog. Solomon gazed at the window and saw the frost creeping over it. He took several bricks of peat, shoved them into the fire, and again stood with his back to the stove, lost in thought. "And suppose we get caught?" His thin old body trembled. He was caught not long ago with an officer's nags. He could still feel the sticks beating his body, cutting his skin, drawing the blood. They beat him so badly that he had to lie in bed a whole month.

That mischance had made Solomon begin thinking of turning to another trade. And every time some new little job came his way, he vowed it would be the last.

"A dog's life. I've lived over fifty years and what have I got for my pains? Nothing but fear all the time. Money? A pauper's wealth!"

Solomon took hold of his sparse beard and held it straight out from his chin. He noticed several grey hairs. "Hm, a summons—they're calling me to the other world."

Solomon recalled how once on a Saturday afternoon he was sitting in the old Beth Hamidrash listening to a Lithuanian *maggid* describe the other world—paradise and hell. Soon after death comes the Angel of the Realm of the Dead, knocks three times at your grave, and asks your name. If the dead man is pious, he answers immediately; a sinner forgets and is lost.

Solomon imagined himself dead. The Angel of the Realm of the Dead, a tall, bony Jew with thick eyebrows—just like Simchah Greber—asks him his name. And he—he has forgotten. . . .

Solomon felt a sinking at the heart. He pressed heavily against the stove and scratched his head. He suddenly felt a fierce hatred for Moses Kuniarsch. Thirty years ago they were both stealing horses together, and now—Solomon is the thief and Moses the merchant. Moses is now a fine respectable member of the community, Warden of the old Beth Hamidrash, and last year he presented a Scroll of the Law to the synagogue. He gives his daughters dowries of two thousand roubles and supports his sons-in-law. And he? He spends sleepless nights, busy making Moses richer.

Solomon could see Moses sleeping in his Viennese bed with the carved headpieces, his long, broad beard spread luxuriantly over his pudgy breast. The quilt rises up and down: he must be dreaming that he has been chosen to be supervisor in the city. And he, Solomon, a thin old man, sits here in the small hours of the night and gets ready to steal a couple of horses for which he will get half and Moses half. And who knows if he won't be caught?

Solomon sighed dully and looked at the clock. "Time to be going." He put on a warm shirt, tied a green belt around him, and stuck a pair of woollen one-fingered mittens into the belt. He pulled on his long boots, turned down the lamp, and went out.

On the outskirts of the city, near the woods, Solomon lifted the bag from his shoulders and waited. He extended his long thin neck and with staring eyes listened like an old hungry wolf to the silence. Then he put two fingers into his mouth and whistled. From the other side of the woods came an answering whistle.

"A clever fellow!" Solomon thought. "If only he weren't so wild, and would listen to his father—I'd be fixed in my old age all right."

Zanvl emerged from the woods and called : " Come on, dad, it's late."

Solomon grabbed his bag and hurried over. " How are the horses getting along ? " he asked.

" They're all right. They're asleep in the stable."

Solomon and Zanvl strode on determinedly. Neither spoke. They looked like two wolves stealing out of the forest into the broad highway. The old man kept feeling at his breast to make sure the revolver was there and mumbling to himself : " Bay horse. Roan. Chestnut horse. Roan. Cholera. Moses Kuniarsh . . ."

Every now and then he would grab Zanvl by the arm : " Somebody's coming ! "

Zanvl would halt, prick his ears and stare round him. No one. He would smile—the old boy was getting shaky—and stride on.

Solomon felt a sharp chill go through his bones. He thought of his Tirzeh lying now under the warm quilt, snoring. " A dog's life. About time I retired from this fine business."

A dog barked. " Damn the dogs ! " Solomon muttered. " A vile death on them ! Why the devil did God ever create them ? "

Scattered houses appeared on the hill. Zanvl took the bag with the shoes and went into the village. A black shaggy dog jumped at him, barking loudly. Zanvl drew back, but the dog came after him. He leaped at the dog, grabbed him with his hands by the throat and began choking him. The dog didn't struggle long ; he rolled his eyes glassily, stuck out his long pointed tongue, and remained lifeless in Zanvl's hands.

Zanvl stood up and looked at the dog stretched at his feet, the long red tongue hanging from his mouth. He spat sharply and looked around : the old man had disappeared.

At the bottom of the hill stood Solomon, his teeth chattering with terror. The sight of Zanvl choking the dog had been too much for him, and he had run away to the bottom of the hill.

Zanvl took hold of the bag ; then with the swiftness of a young gypsy he lifted the door off the hinges. Warm steam beat into his face. He took the whisky out, made the horses drunk, and put shoes on their feet. Then he led them softly out of the stable.

At the foot of the hill Solomon put the shoes into a bag that was tied to his shoulder. They mounted their horses and rode away into the grey night.

## THE WHITE SHADOW

By LEO KENIG

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

Leo Kenig, born 1889 in the Province of Minsk, White Russia. His family moved to Odessa when he was a child and he studied in the Odessa Yeshiba. His first story was printed when he was fifteen and, at the age of seventeen, he went to Palestine to study art at the Bezalel School under Hirschenberg. Afterwards he studied art in Munich and Paris and has written about art and artists for Yiddish periodicals, and is considered to be the most important Yiddish writer on these subjects. He has lived in London since 1914 and edited the London Yiddish literary and art monthly "Renaissance," 1920-21. Kenig is one of the outstanding Yiddish essayists and publicists and is a recognised authority on Yiddish literature. He has written many stories and novels and strives for simplicity, quietness and honest description.

And Miriam loved Judah, not Joshua.

Judah was strong, and bronzed. There was passion in his voice, passion had tanned his skin, and he took her and knew her.

Joshua was slim, and golden, pale and thoughtful, and he seemed to be always with you. No matter where you looked, you saw him. He was of those rare Rabbis who teach little, preach seldom, and yet you are sure they know more than any of the others, and you think only of them.

Judah taught often and with fervour, but even as you revelled in his teaching, you looked at Joshua.

The disciples listened eagerly to Judah's fiery speech, but they saw only Joshua, as if his pale countenance looked out of Judah's bronzed visage.

Looking into Judah's black glowing eyes, you dreamt of Joshua's eyes, blue, dreamy and serene.

So Miriam always saw Joshua. When she was in Judah's attic and looked out of the window towards the Temple courtyard, or the vineyards at the foot of the Mount of Olives, she saw Joshua's slim,

white form. Gliding among the mountains, or like a sentinel among a group of disputants in the Temple courtyard.

And as you see sunspots everywhere after you have been staring at the sun, so you saw him even when he was not there. In shadow or in light, no matter on whom her eyes rested, a white spot would suddenly appear, flicker about, and take shape as a white, slender form.

And again she saw.

It came to pass that she imagined that he stood behind her, like a white shadow.

And more also.

While Judah scorched her flesh with his breath, she felt the other's quiet coolness fanning her. When Judah bit her shoulder with his teeth, it seemed to her that a soft, sad smile stroked her form.

And she was uneasy in Judah's arms. And she was afraid that she sinned.

So she began to call Joshua husband, as the disciples called Joshua Rabbi, though they learnt from Judah. "My lord, my husband"—and sometimes, too, "my Rabbi," she used to call him, as if she were speaking to her real husband, lord and Rabbi.

Joshua did not object, for he loved to bless rather than to curse; but Judah was angry, for he usually scolded, and most of all because she was his, and he loved her. And since Judah could not think of anything without anger, and he saw all things in the blackest colours, the thought suddenly came into his mind :

"I am living with another man's wife."

And his blood boiled in him, and he drove Miriam out of his abode.

So Miriam reflected :

"My husband, my lord and my Rabbi is sanctifying himself, and he does not now wish to know any woman."

When Judah drove her out with imprecations, she seemed to hear in his curses Joshua's tender words:

"Happy is the man who has put away woman for the kingdom of heaven's sake."

And she used to sit on the white stone stairs of Judah's house, happy that she was near him, as if above her were not Judah

living and suffering, but Joshua, absorbed in holy prayer. And when Judah went by, and spurned her with his foot, she saw the white shadow pass, and felt a tender hand laid on her head.

And she grew closer ■ Joshua's silent disciples.

And Joshua believed that she was being purified.

Then Judah saw a vision.

The white shadow covered the whole earth like snow. All the rivers of blood, all the swamps, all the marshes were covered by this sanctified white. People and nations would turn from God, they would murder each other, and hide themselves blindly, without knowing what they were doing, beneath the pure shroud-like white shadow.

They would desecrate their most sacred seed, pouring them out like water, and hope that the whiteness would cover them.

They would go after strange women, and after strange gods, and falsely cling to the white shadow.

They would besmirch the wings of the cherubim, and of the white shadow itself, and would speak in its name and ■ its name.

And it seemed to him that he would save his wife, his people, and all mankind if he would stain the white shadow with living sacred human blood. The whiteness would no longer be so pure, and sin would not be so dangerous. If the Redeemer were more human, people would fling less sin upon his shoulders.

And he rose up and went forth to save his wife, his people and all mankind.

And when it came to pass, and Joshua was crucified, Miriam stood at the foot of a night-laden mountain, and hidden there looked out. She saw not Joshua, but Judah on the cross. The white shadow stood beside her and hovered tenderly over her . . .

## AMONG THE TREES

By A. M. FUCHS

*Translated by* HANNAH BERMAN

Abraham Moses Fuchs, born 1890 in Eastern Galicia. His father and brothers traded in the neighbouring villages in flax, hides and corn, and in the summer rented orchards and harvested and sold the fruit. Soaked in the life of the rugged, hard-working Jews of the villages. He went to Chedar until he was twelve years old and also attended the Baron de Hirsch school in his township. At the age of fifteen he went to Lemberg, worked at various trades and joined the Jewish Labour Movement (Bund). His friendship with the famous Hebrew writer, Shofman, considerably influenced his literary development. In 1911 his first short story was published and his first volume of short stories appeared in the following year. Since 1914 he has been living in Vienna and has had several novels published. One of the most important of the younger group of Yiddish writers. A severe realist, depicting mostly the life of the lower classes and the unfortunate.

### I

THE little horse is trotting briskly, mincingly, his thin little legs winding in and out of one another, like the links of a chain, treading on his own flat, lean shadow, which runs at full length in advance of him, on the distant, white, sunny field-road.

Reb Zelig the orchardman sits dozing, hunched up, in the little waggon, whip in hand. His broad red beard sprawls over the thick, dirty woollen scarf about his neck, and glistens in the sun, transparent with a golden shimmer. The little waggon rattles and clatters, its broken slats tied up with string, dragging itself wearily into the hot, congealed noonday-silence: Ta-ta, ta-ta-ta . . .

A thick, white cloud of dust follows. The golden flies humming, the bees buzzing into one's ears, lull one into a still more profound weariness. When the little waggon suddenly drops, with its front wheels, into a rut in the road, Reb Zelig jerks his head up quickly, and through his tightly-compressed lips mumbles aloud: "Whoa!"

On both sides of the road the fields are already cut, empty. Here and there, all alone, stands a forlorn, neglected, withered thistle ; from its beard fly out the first end-of-summer, silvery puff-balls. They settle on Reb Zelig's eyebrows, the rim of his greasy fur hat and his whip. In the distance, stooping peasants are collecting the swathes, and piling them up in pointed sheaves that look like tiny huts. Under the dazzling-white, greenish, end-of-summer sky, the peasants appeared to be very far away, shrunken, and small as children. The sharpening of a scythe sounds thin, bright and clear in the congealed, warm blueness, merging into it as into a dream.

" God prosper you ! " Reb Zelig calls out.

" God prosper you, too ! " the peasants shout back.

Across the distant fields, thin, melancholy little woods ; the winding, clayey ditches, with their protruding weeds ; the dirty-caked, white footprints of the animals in the shallow vales and winding hills—across the roads and highways stretch the bygone years the Jew has spent, traversing them on foot or by waggon. This is soil which has sustained him with its products, and which will give him eternal rest, in the depths of its bosom.

Below, in the valley, sleeps the village. The little roofs, hidden among the thick, dark trees, beetle over the small windows, and look like so many ragged caps pulled down over so many eyes.

The black wheel of the mill revolves sluggishly under the flowing stream. On the bank, a peasant woman is beating her linen laid on a flat stone, with a wooden spatula. Her thick bare legs, raw and red with the water, show out from under her coarse calico upturned skirts.

Now Reb Zelig's horse and waggon is flying downhill, the horse's mane fluttering in the wind. Coming towards them, uphill, is a ramshackle outfit. The feeble horse bows his head, puffs out his sides, tears up the ground with his hoofs, and with all its might, is pulling the heavy coffin which lies lengthwise across the waggon. A small, barefooted peasant, with long, matted hair, his shirt hanging out over his trousers, is walking in advance, gripping tightly with both hands a huge oak crucifix, the end resting on his stomach. A black dog runs along, its red tongue hanging out so that it touches the ground. After it comes a high waggon laden with sheaves of corn. The white oxen yoked to the waggon hold back, with their thick, black heads, the

The old wide-branched trees, gnarled, intertwined, heavily laden with big apples, overgrown with moss, the thick trunks completely hidden by high, wild creepers and weeds, contain the silence in themselves, woven into them, and shut out the sky darkly. On the black sun-flecks in the grass, the shadows of the twigs tremble lightly, as though etched in smoke. Birds, with red heads and yellow breasts, sharpen their beaks in the trees, fly about in their thick darkness, whistling and screaming.

The tired horse, with the white spot on its forehead, blinks its blind eye, and sneezes pleasantly. Reb Zelig looks for a place to settle down on, in the fragrant green thickness. In the shadow, his red beard is grey. Then he unyokes the horse, hobbles its front legs with a rope, and gives him a punch in the belly :

“Tp-r-r ! Go and graze.”

Every year, Reb Zelig hires this same orchard from the overlord of the village. Rab Zelig is a tall, broad, round-shouldered, deaf Jew, and has a blue birthmark under his left eye. The tails of his green coat are always tucked into his girdle. And his greasy skull-cap, under his shabby velvet hat, is stuck to his broad, sulky leathern forehead, like a black earthenware bowl. He lives at Rozdina, and does business in partnership with his sons and sons-in-law, itinerant pedlars and orchardmen, thick-set, hard, pock-pitted men, like logs of wood, swathed in hard, metallic, filthy jerkins, one on top of the other, summer and winter. Their noses, between their matted beards, are bulbous, and full of greenish hairs. They are always squabbling, making calculations with chalk on the table, while they fling things at one another's heads, but at the Festival of the Rejoicing in the Law, they buy up all the honours in partnership.

“Wherever can that assistant be—where? Probably asleep in

the barn. He can sleep," says Reb Zelig to himself, and he goes off towards the thatched barn which stands in the middle of the orchard, on a sunny, yellow, trodden-out spot, leaning against a terribly thick, many-branched tree. The twigs reach down to the grass on the ground.

Inside the dim-lit barn stand sacks filled with apples and pears, big, green, hard winter fruits. Heaps of fruit are on straw; bags are lying about, boxes, rags. A carved wooden spoon is under an earthenware crock, a dilapidated volume of *Miracles*, with thick, coarse leaves, a hump of salt. At the entrance on a little twig hangs a dry bit of rag and a jar of water.

Reb Zelig puts his two hands to his mouth, and roars:

"Reb Lippe! Reb Lippe!"

"Here, h-e-r-e!" a voice replies from the distance, and the echo returns delayed, dull, from somewhere far away: "Here! H-e-r-e!"

Down below, not far from whence the voice has come, presently appears among the trees, Reb Lippe the watchman—a little, shrivelled-up old man, a little hump on his back, wearing a short jerkin that has no buttons. A big, old-fashioned silver chain, and a watch-key, hang over his stomach. He had got them fifty years ago, as a wedding present from his wife who had divorced him a year later. Since that time he has lived alone. In the winter he goes about the houses in the village, patching without spectacles Jewish body garments, cleaning goose feathers behind the stove, and, in the gloaming, telling fine tales in the warm tailors' Synagogue. In the summer, he keeps watch in the orchard for Reb Zelig for twelve *kreutzers* a week.

"You know, Reb Zelig, I caught a young peasant to-day," Reb Lippe shouts from the distance.

His big felt hat, the lining of which is coming out from the brim, stands up jauntily in a gay point, on the top of his grey head; and his little beard, white, soft and downy, like soap suds, hangs down from his chin, leaving bare his shrivelled-up, yellow, pointed little chin which reminds one of the bare neck of a big cock.

Reb Lippe strides over the grass, a thick, crooked stick in his hand, and after him runs a little barefoot peasant-boy with a white, flaxen head. His dirty little body shows out of the holes in his ragged linen trousers.

"Fear God, Reb Lippe; give me back my cap," the little boy wails without shedding a tear.

"It's wrong to steal. What do you mean by it! . . . I have caught a thief. Do you hear, Reb Zelig?" Reb Lippe says ingratiatingly to his master.

"Eh? What?" asks Reb Zelig, putting his hand to his ear, while his mouth draws itself up sideways in such a way that a black hollow appears in his hairy cheek.

"You know, Reb Zelig, I watched the orchard all day. . . . Caught a peasant boy," shouts Reb Lippe with all his might into the other's ear. "You hear. Down there in the orchard a peasant boy stole in, and shook down apples, stole whole pocketsful. . . . I snatched off his cap. Here it is for you, Reb Zelig."

Without saying a word, Reb Zelig surlily takes the boy's tattered cap from Reb Lippe's hand, feels it carefully on all sides, turns the lining out, and says, as he shakes his red beard:

"Worth two *krentzers*; at most two *krentzers*. . . A real bargain!"

"And supposing it's two *krentzers*," interposes Red Lippe heatedly. "Two *krentzers* don't go begging either. . . . Did you ever see the likes. . . . If you travel the whole world, you won't find even half a *krentzer*. . . . I'll tell you, Reb Zelig, it's worth listening to. The Rabbi, Reb Meyerl, was once going to the Kosleff fair, and so . . ."

Meanwhile, the peasant boy seats himself on the grass, scratches his shoulder on the tree, and catches bees by their thin, transparent little wings. His crying has ceased, is forgotten. He stares up at the sun, which, from his long gazing, begins to shake on high among the tree-tops, and a yellow-golden wafer begins to scald his eyes. It flutters about, and then turns black. . . .

And while Reb Lippe is telling the tale of Reb Meyerl, Reb Zelig moves about the waggon, takes out of it a little pot of thick gruel, tied about with a string. His wife at home had given it to him for his supper.

"You have brought something nice for me, Reb Zelig?" Reb Lippe asks cunningly, smiling and rubbing his hands.

"Eh? What?" asks Reb Zelig, as though he does not understand what Reb Lippe means.

"Over there, in the wallet," he grumbles. "Just there. . . . Underneath, in the sack."

Reb Lippe searches a long time, groping about in the waggon, lifts out a heavy bag of bran for the horse, drags down a box, overturns a barrel, searches carefully, thoughtfully, with joyous expectation, until he finds a little loaf of bread under the straw.

"Oh, the dear little loaf," he says, somewhat disappointed, sulking. "It is very kind of you, Reb Zelig, to bring me a little loaf. . . . Many thanks. . . . I thought perhaps a little cooked food. . . . Never mind."

The two men crawl into the barn, each groping in his little bundle; then crawl out again with a groan, turn their backs on each other, one this way and one that, and each drinks from his own bottle. . . . Then they wash their hands, dry them on their coat tails, and sit down on the grass to eat. The iron heel tips of their twisted, hard top-boots, with their red lugs, glitter in a patch of sunlight like glass. Reb Zelig eats his thick gruel out of the pot, holding it firmly between his knees. With his sharp pocket-knife Reb Lippe cuts thin slices off the loaf, a tall loaf, hard, with a crisp, brown crust, and dips them in salt. After eating, the men stroke their beards, sigh, and say grace, satisfied, in a drawn-out sing-song: "Who feedeth the whole world. . . ."

Reb Zelig begrudges himself; he picks up a little slightly-rotten apple from under the tree and chews it enjoyably. Reb Lippe searches out a big apple, from the sack, a lovely apple, with red cheeks, bites appetisingly into it, with his strong teeth, and immediately spits it out:

"Wormy. . . . A lovely apple, and wormy. . . . Let me see. Tell me, Reb Zelig, how does the worm get into the apple? Around and about it is whole, and inside is a worm. . . . I think it is a secret of the Almighty. . . . Listen, it is written in the Holy Law. . . ."

"Made an end of an apple. . . . That a Jew should have the disposition to make an end of everything. . . . Well, well——" mutters Reb Zelig, wrinkling up his thick eyebrows that sullenly overhang his eyes, like stuck-on pieces of dried mud.



The long, still, hot end-of-summer days quickly ripen the fruit, fill them with juicy heaviness, bleach to yellow the thin little stalks which become wilted, and grow feeble. There is a crashing

among the thick, many-branched heavily-laden trees. Twigs are breaking. Young barefoot peasant girls are carrying piles of apples in their coarse aprons, are clambering, even more quickly than the white-headed, dirty-faced boys, up into the trees, playing about there, among the shaded denseness of the thick branches. Coarse banter ■ flung from one tree to another, accompanied by loud guffaws. And when Reb Lippe raises his head to the pickers, he sees them sitting among the trees, at their very tops, like huge monkeys, and they are eating. The grey, small peasant eyes gleam in the greenness, teeth are crunching the apples, and tongues are clacking loudly in excitement.

"They are not picking the apples, the dogs. . . . Look, Reb Zelig. . . . They are eating them. . . . Hi ! boys and girls, why don't you work !" shouts Reb Lippe. But a guffaw answers him out of the trees, whichever side he turns. Reb Lippe screws up his nose in disgust, spits and runs away.

Reb Zelig does not hear what Reb Lippe is saying. He only sees him moving about, too lazy to stoop down, to do anything, to pick up an apple.

"So long as he takes my money, my blood. . . . That a man should not want to put his hand in cold water. . . . May the devil take him. . . ." Reb Zelig mutters angrily. He has taken off his long coat. Out of his filthy jacket dangle his fringes ; a yellow leaf rests on top of his skull cap. The man works with all his might, toils. He bends down with difficulty, drags along sacks of fruit, carries full boxes on his back, shakes powerfully with both hands a thick, black tree. The fruit drops down, and like a thick hail scatters on the grass. Reb Zelig runs, hurries the pickers, and catches a peasant girl who is about to escape from the orchard with a sackful of apples. He drags the sack from under the girl's blouse, gives her two thumps in the back, pulls the shawl off her head, and shouts :

"Robbers ! Murderers !"

The heaps of fruit grow, the commotion increases, the filled sacks are multiplied, and when Reb Zelig is carrying them off on his back, his wide beard hangs down, blown apart, shining and gay, looking like a respectable new besom. The work continues until right into the gathering darkness. Reb Zelig does not sleep in the little barn with Reb Lippe, but alone, in the open, on the moist, dewy grass, beside the waggon laden with fruit, ■ sack

under his head, covered by his overcoat, and with his skull-cap on his eyes. One must watch over one's bit of property, so that the peasants, the thieves, shall not carry it off ; and one cannot rely on strangers. Will Reb Lippe the watchman watch it ? A fine watchman. . . . He sleeps in the barn, curled up in the straw, his top-boots removed, and, as far as he is concerned, the whole orchard might be carried away. In the morning, in the bluish cold of the dawn, when the day is about to break, Reb Zelig gets up, washes his eyes with the dew, harnesses the waggon, and drives home to the village with his fruit :

" Reb Lippe, Reb Lippe, keep watch, Reb Lippe. . . . Did anyone ever hear a Jew snore like that ! All my labour is wasted —" Reb Zelig shouts into the barn. The horse and waggon crawl with difficulty over the wet, cold road on which the dew glistens. The wheels creak, the dry sides of the horse puff themselves out, as he creeps, crouching, up the hill, into the still, distant, blue emptiness. In the vales, filled with white mist on the border of the sleeping village, the horse and waggon remain standing beside the black tree-masses, close to the ditches leading to the orchards. Reb Zelig puts his hands to his mouth, and roars into the dark stillness :

" Shays ! Shloulmah ! Pinna ! "

Everywhere among the trees appears another Jew, a son or a son-in-law of Reb Zelig's—a man with a short, hard, granite beard, his warm jacket hanging from his shoulder.

" Gathered anything ? "

" Three sacks."

They load the waggon in silence ; they bind the ropes with their black, horny, scarred hands, and tie the ends into terribly hard knots. They send back home the empty pots, wrapped up in little sacks ; and they disperse in silence, their top-boots wet with dew.

" Whoa ! " Reb Zelig whistles through his pursed up lips. The white houses of the overlord's estates gleam out from between the trees ; and the peasants, men and women, are already showing themselves. Horses are being harnessed, voices still dull with sleep are heard rising, and the odour of fresh dung and warm, freshly-drawn milk fill the air. In the distance, the stripped fields are beginning to redden in the quivering rosy brightness, gilded by the red, rising young sun. All together, the birds begin to

scream, and float about in the rosy brightness. One imagines that they are flying without spreading out their wings. Barefooted peasants, with long matted hair, are already following the plough which cuts the fresh, moist earth into black, even waves. A stork is walking slowly among them on his long red legs, and, abstracted and silent, picks at the earth with his long, sharp beak. The church spire gleams behind the hill ; the round roof of the Synagogue rises above the crooked, straw thatches ; and when Reb Zelig drives into Rozdina, the wet panes of glass are already glowing rosilily in the sun. Women are emptying their slops in front of their doors, and men with dusty beards are sweeping the doorsteps of their little shops. The horse and waggon are surrounded by excited women, with shawls tied about them. They scream, thrust out their hands, bargain, taste and chew. Baskets and aprons open out, and swallow the meagre quarts of apples which Reb Zelig measures out between the crowds of heads. He lies stretched above the sacks, takes money, and shouts angrily :

“ Three for a quart, women.”

Barefooted grandchildren, with dirty noses, scramble up the wheels, begging their grandfather with greedy eyes to give them an apple ; but the grandfather does not give them any :

“ Go home, wretches. . . . There are no apples.”

Reb Zelig's beard trembles ; the birthmark under his left eye ■ big and blue, and in the fluster and commotion, his felt hat gets pushed off his leathery forehead.

“ I will kill you, murderers.”

Their grandfather's angry shouts are drowned amid the voices of the women. They steal from the boxes ; they pull the fruit out of the holes in the sacks which were stuffed with straw ; they stuff their pockets which are deeper than bottomless sacks ; they ride on the pole, and quarrel on the wheels with strange boys who make their noses bleed. And there is no greater happiness in life than that of one's childhood, when one has a ride on the empty waggon which the grandfather turns towards home from the market-place. Flies are buzzing in the empty boxes, which exude a sweetish acrid fragrance. The grandfather distributes among the children, to each of them, a slightly-rotten little apple which has remained in the sack ; and for the rest of one's life, one tastes the sweetness of it,

Arrived at the little hill, Reb Zelig first of all attends to the horse. He holds a pail of water on his knee, and the horse sucks at the wet, cold clearness until the last drop. His belly swells, and he whinnies happily through his nostrils, and flicks his tail.

"T-p-r—— Keep still, carcass," says the Jew. With one sharp glance, he takes in the whole of his possessions—the garden, the broken fence, the black straw roof on which green moss ■ growing, the fowls. And Reb Zelig notices with annoyance that the ladder which is standing up against the loft has a broken rung.

"Have you brought anything, Zelig?" asks the woman, holding out her apron. Silently, Reb Zelig takes onions, corn-cobs, radishes, black, hard, crisp, out of his overcoat pockets; and throws the vegetables into the woman's apron:

"Here, put them away."

Afterwards, Reb Zelig has a little squabble with the women—daughters and daughters-in-law. He has to give them back the pots and bags which their husbands have sent home. And though the old man knows well enough that the empty pots have been filled with the finest apples and pears, he pretends that he does not know. . . . For the empty pots which Reb Zelig brings home to his wife are also filled. . . . Now Reb Zelig stands up to say his prayers. His yellow, dirty praying-shawl about his head, the great leather head-piece standing out from his forehead like a black pot, he stands bowed beside the window, prays and sews with a big, coarse sack-needle. He is mending a little bag. And while Reb Zelig is eating his breakfast out of a big earthenware bowl, dipping his bread into it, crunching the crisp radishes, he counts the money he has taken for the waggon-load of fruit—big copper coins, and heavy silver ones. Carefully, thoughtfully, he counts it twice over, his hat pushed back on to his neck, his brows knitted. Then he ties the money into a strong linen bag, and hides it away in his boot-upper. . . . And before the women manage to tie up the pots of cooked food for their husbands, Reb Zelig already has the whip in his hand, has kissed the "doorpost"; and as he combs the crumbs out of his beard he shouts, his nose red with sweat:

"I will not wait. . . . I have no time to wait. . . . They are ruining me over there. . . . Good day. . . ."

Reb Zelig imagines that over there thieves are carrying off all he has, stealing his whole orchard. And he drives the horse,

lashes it, beats it with the end of the whip-handle ; and the little waggon flies along, rattles and clatters on the broken road, overtakes the peasant waggons from below. A little foal runs after them, and the liquid spills out of the pots, soaks the rags. He always brings the men of the orchards empty pots.

When Reb Zelig arrives back at his own orchard, he bends down, dips into the cool, green, dense stillness, as in a green river. Now he realises how his old bones ache from the terribly hard work ; but, at the same time, the tied-up linen bag of money in his boot-upper warms him. It is full and heavy, and Reb Zelig sighs :

" Praise be to God ! "

Reb Lippe, the watchman, lies under the tree, reading aloud, in a pious, *Gemarrah* sing-song, out of his yellow, scatter-leaved *Tales of Righteousness* :

" . . . The pious one, Halpasa, the son of Dusa, was once riding ■ Jerusalem on a donkey. On the road, he found a purse of silver shekels. . . . "

A little way off in the grass, sits a little peasant boy, crying. Reb Lippe had caught him, and snatched off his ragged cap.

" I have caught a thief . . . a peasant boy. . . . Do you hear, Reb Zelig——"

### III

In the noonday calm, the silence in the trees is congealed as though heavy with satiation. The long-drawn crowing of the cock comes floating up from the village. The two men move about the orchard, their thick sticks in their hands, saying nothing, not looking at each other, each for himself, but always finding themselves together. . . . The branches of the young trees bent under the load of fruit are held up with props. The trees which have already been stripped of their ripe fruit, are bare, their leaves yellow, crinkled, turned upside down, with their lower sides uppermost, and through them one sees patches of bright sky. Reb Zelig throws back his head, looking for the last apples in the trees, which hide themselves in the very tops, for the sake of the birds. He goes from tree to tree, counts, calculates how much profit each tree brought last year, how much there will be this year. And no doubt, next year, the Almighty will provide a good harvest.

Behind Reb Zelig's back, through the straggling thick bushes and thorns, peeps out Reb Lippe's black pointed felt hat. He crawls along slowly, stinging his hands as he thrusts the prickly things out of his way. His protruding black hat shakes to and fro, standing erect in the greenness, like a bottle floating in a river. He stops frequently, takes a wild growth in his hands, a strange one which he does not yet know, opens its little head, blows asunder its petals, and shaking his head vigorously, he marvels :

"Well . . . eh . . . the miracles of Him whose Name be blessed. . . . His great miracles. . . . Dear darling God——"

"Reb Zelig, excuse me, Reb Zelig. Guess who is going to lead the prayers at the big Synagogue at the coming festivals. . . . Reb Zelig——"

"Eh ? What ?" asks Reb Zelig, bending his ear to his hand.

"Reb Yossel Pokripivner. . . . Oh, how he can sing the prayers. . . . He has a voice. . . . He can pray. . . . You hear, Reb Zelig——"

The two men love to roam deep in the thick orchard. Reb Lippe loves to talk, to tell tales, to hear his own soft effeminate voice which sinks into the dim green stillness, loses itself in the depths of the calmness.

"You hear, Reb Zelig. You may well listen. It will be some fifty odd years now since I once drove at night with a waggon load of merchandise towards Sinivitz. There was a hard frost, a severe snowstorm. We lost our road, wandered and wandered——"

All at once the air in the orchard becomes congealed and oppressive. The mild, sweetish apple-fragrance is heavy with mustiness. The deep, high grass underfoot is bending, suddenly darkening with a terrifying grey shadow. The branches press against one another, and become rigid in thick dark knots. A frightened clapping of wings is heard somewhere deep in the trees, and a short, hoarse terrified scream from a bird. From the distance comes rolling up slowly a suppressed, muffled roar of thunder, like the grinding of a bridge on which a heavy load ■ travelling. The thunder draws nearer, crashes, rumbles, swifter, louder, stronger, as though flat, giant, terrifying stones were shattering against one another with a fearfully loud crashing sound.

The world shudders, the heavens crack open, a narrow, sharp scald, a sharp-edged flash flings a blinding white glare into the

eyes, and, on the instant, crushes the being back into the depths of himself, just as ■ his garments had suddenly become too big for him. Reb Lippe catches hold of Reb Zelig's sleeve, and both men quickly pronounce the blessing: "Blessed art Thou Who has made the creation!"

One senses a scorching, a wild commotion. Torrents of rain pour down, thick drops, heavy, warm, making a loud noise, falling swiftly like dried peas on the trees, bending them down. A thick tree lies riven, torn to ribbons, the branches scattered. A flame of fire spurts forth from the cracks, and ■ extinguished by the rain. The black smoke is quickly dispersed by the wind, and veils the fresh wood-shavings which are still hanging down, rent by the lightning.

The two men start to run, in the darkness, towards the barn.

"Wait for me, Reb Lippe. Just see how he runs!" cries Reb Zelig, and the wind drowns his voice.

"Quicker! Q-u-i-c-k-e-r! You will be soaked, Reb Zelig. . . . Fly," cries Reb Lippe. He races on in advance among the trees which are roaring in the darkness with a terrifying din, tossing heavily, groaning, knocking their heads against one another, and leaping back. The wind blows down the fruit, forces up, and twists the branches back to the trunk; and the trees look like giant umbrellas turned inside out by the storm. The two men run along, their shoulders bowed, their coat tails pulled over their heads; and the rain washes and rinses down their broad haunches that look like leather saddles. Their feet become entangled in the undergrowth, stumble over logs, broken branches which are still attached to the trees, and groaning heavily. Reaching the barn, the two men run in under the little straw roof.

"There's a downpour for you!" says Reb Lippe, panting, and shaking the raindrops from his hat. "Well, what do you say, Reb Zelig—eh? Obviously, it was destined. . . . The pear tree, poor thing. . . the big one, has caught the storm. . . . Such a healthy tree. . . . You hear, Reb Zelig. . . . A tree, too, is God's creature. . . . If it is destined. No created thing is in his own hands."

When Reb Lippe talks, he closes one eye, as ■ he were afraid lest he see the black shadow of the end which comes upon all creatures in God's world.

Reb Zelig is silent; he blows his nose into his coat-tails, and says:

"The overlord is not in the village. . . . We can take home a little waggon load of wood from the tree. . . . Where is the axe?"

Reb Zelig squeezes the water out of his beard with both hands, and says no more.

"Oh, merciful Father!" the two Jews groan suddenly and in one voice.

#### IV

The storm has abated.

Within the barn it is dark and oppressively hot. The two men lie, stomach downwards, warm in the straw, listening to the first rain of the autumn falling thickly, quietly, sadly.

"Excuse me, Reb Zelig, move a bit. . . . It is raining in on my side——" says Reb Lippe digging the other in the ribs with his elbow.

"Oh! Well . . . a Jew . . . doesn't let one lie still. The whole world is not big enough for him——" Reb Zelig mutters irritably.

"You hear, Reb Zelig. I will tell you a fine tale. You want to hear it? . . . About the Master of the Good Name. . . . Once upon a time, outside Brody——"

The gentle melancholy rustling of the wet leaves outside, wove and carried off into the distance the tales told by Reb Lippe—the tales which, in the course of years have fallen to pieces, crumbled away, like pieces of silk of which many threads still look new and glossy. The man was saturated with them; they lived in his brain, hiding themselves away like a flock of birds in a dark tree.

But suddenly the tales began to wind round, entangle themselves in one another. Reb Lippe felt that he was losing himself; he did not hear the words which were tripping each other up, dancing, spinning round, dry and hot, like little glowing stones, . . . rapidly . . . swiftly. . . . Then they drew themselves out easily . . . smooth as rubber. . . . Reb Lippe has his hand on Reb Zelig's boot-upper, and feels through it, trembling, warm, the purse of money. . . . His long, dry fingers thrust themselves forward slowly, grope about gently, gently, take something out. . . . While doing this, his old, white, withered eyes, almost closed in the semi-darkness, are like nuts that are slightly cracked, showing their brown kernels within.

Reb Zelig is asleep, snoring pleasantly, his sides heaving powerfully, whistling through his big, crooked nose, with a harsh,

spasmodic sound. But exactly at that moment, when Reb Lippe is about to reach the climax of his tale—how the beggar who had slept at the wayside inn turned out to be Elijah the Prophet himself, Reb Zelig suddenly turned his crooked, high-bridged nose on the other side, and said in a sullen wail :

" Lies there, and chatters. . . . Outside, folks are stealing . . . carrying off the whole orchard, and he sleeps. . . . The Jew is ruining me."

The last words of the tale, crumpled up, stick in Reb Lippe's throat. His head drops forward, trembling ; he mutters hoarsely, like a cock which has been interrupted in the middle of crowing. He thrusts his nose into the little wooden snuff-box, and takes a big sniff ; after which he rolls a sack about his head, and crawls out of the warm barn, out into the grey rain. . . .

## V

The sky is greenish-blue, washed clean, bright. A big, soft, white cloud that looks like a camel with two humps, lies sprawled out across the sun. From beneath its two dark, snowy edges there leap forth a number of fresh, young, newly-washed beams. The half-cut grass is strewn with fallen leaves, apples, broken twigs, an unravelled bird's nest. The grass lifts itself up, straightens itself out, dries quickly, and drops of water glisten on the blades in the sun. The trees stretch themselves, spread their branches, and exude a warm, acrid odour. Worms crawl about on the fresh green moss ; birds are screaming gaily, and picking up the worms with their beaks. A big grey frog, with a soft white belly, leaps out of the wet ditch. From the smithy in the village comes the clear, short, staccato beats of the hammer. At the sides of the road, the peasants are going home already, in their big, wide, straw field-hats, pitch-forks and rakes on their shoulders ; a sharp scythe gleams solitary from one shoulder. They are singing their mournful long-drawn-out little songs, and throwing stones into the orchards of the Jews. Although they cannot collect the fruit they bring down in this way they delight in doing harm ■ the Jews.

In the centre of the orchard, outside the barn, Reb Zelig moves about, looking for something, very agitated. Suddenly the birth-mark under his eye turns red, big, shiny, as though enflamed.

He ■ searching in the straw, shakes out the rags, the boxes ; every minute he feels in his boot-upper, as he talks to himself, very excited, frightened :

" Not there . . . not there. . . Oh, what has befallen me——"

Then he puts his two hands to his mouth, and calls :

" Reb Lippe, R-e-b L-i-p-p-e-e-e !"

" Here. H-e-r-e !" A weak voice, scarce audible, replies from afar off.

A long time passes before Reb Lippe appears from the distance, among the trees. His pointed hat is bashed in, creased. Over one shoulder he carries a long, ancient, ragged fur coat which drags heavily in the wet grass.

" Reb Lippe, come here, quickly," cries Reb Zelig.

" What for ? . . . I have no time. I am collecting apples——" Reb Lippe shouts back.

" I don't want any apples. . . . Now he suddenly starts gathering apples. Come here at once," Reb Zelig says.

Reb Lippe comes crawling slowly, holding his two hands to his head, and groaning :

" Help ! . . . The peasants have killed me. . . . I got a stone right on my head. . . . Help ! . . . Save me——"

Reb Zelig stares at him a moment from under his thick, angry, overhanging eyebrows, and says :

" Tell me, Reb Lippe. Have you seen my purse ?"

" What purse ?"

" My purse of money . . . I got it in the village for my fruit ; eighteen silver pieces ; my blood. . . . My purse is gone. . . . Woe to me. . . . Dear God——"

" What are you saying ? . . . I don't understand." Reb Lippe mumbles, holding one hand to his ear. " I will help you to look. . . . You have either lost it, or you have been robbed somewhere, poor man. . . . I can tell you a fine tale——"

" Once upon a time there was a very rich man. . . . He had a lot of treasures and money . . . gold and silver, and coins. . . . You hear, Reb Zelig——"

Reb Lippe is crawling about in the grass, on his knees, groping with his hands, and helping in the search.

" Who talks of stealing ?" Reb Zelig says, flinging a swift angry side-glance. Instantly something has become clear to him. . . . Now he hears distinctly every word the other is saying, as if

he had never been deaf in his life. Now he hears the whole tale which Reb Lippe is telling about the rich man who was attacked by robbers. . . .

"Where did you keep it, Reb Zelig?"

"Keep what?"

"Your purse and its money, I mean——"

"What do you mean, where? Did anyone ever hear such talk from a Jew. . . . In my boot-upper, as always . . . the purse with its money——"

"Whatever are you saying, Reb Zelig. . . . Who keeps money in a boot-upper? . . . Oh, help, I shall not get over it. . . . There's a Jew for you. . . . Ha, ha, ha!" Reb Lippe bursts out laughing in a quivering voice. He laughs, chokes and coughs with secret, enjoyable mockery.

"Oh, Reb Zelig, Reb Zelig, how many times have I said to you: Do not keep your money in your boot-upper. . . . There may be a hole, and it may fall out. . . . Ha, ha, ha. . . . In the boot-upper?"

"Boot-upper, boot-upper. . . . Look at him, my fine fellow——" Reb Zelig grimaces with aggravation. He bends his broad shoulders with difficulty, gropes, searches in the straw with trembling fingers, in the grass; the roots of his hair under his skull-cap stand erect on his old head. His beard is trembling with rage. The tears come into his eyes.

"Do you know what I will tell you, Reb Zelig. Better harness the horse to the little waggon, and go home to sleep. . . . What will you do here in the orchard at night? . . . I will mind it myself. . . . But do not forget to bring me something nice to-morrow, please God. . . . You hear, Reb Zelig. . . . It's a loss——" says Reb Lippe. "But the Almighty will compensate you. . . . Believe me, everything is possible in this world. . . . May God protect us!"

Reb Zelig hears and says nothing. From time to time he throws a half-glance sideways at the other; and the birthmark under his eye gradually grows smaller, paler, less marked. . . . If one looked hard, one might imagine that Reb Zelig is smiling faintly into his grey-red hairiness.

"Drive home? Yes, you are right, Reb Lippe. I will go home to sleep. . . . Well, I've had a loss——" says Reb Zelig. And at once he harnesses the horse to the little waggon. He is in a

hurry, drags the horse, entangles ropes, carries a box. Reb Lippe assists him panting, pulls forward a shaft, and gives the horse a tweak of the tail :

" Does he go, the blind one ? "

" He goes, he goes——"

Reb Lippe is very gay, laughs through his strong old teeth which are yellow and broad, and at the same time, he gives Reb Zelig a flip on the nose. Reb Zelig whips the horse, and clacks his tongue thickly :

" Whoa—oa—oa ! Keep well, Reb Lippe ! "

" Keep well ! Reb Zelig. May you find a bargain !——" Reb Lippe calls after the little waggon as it disappears among the trees. " But don't forget the little wood, Reb Zelig, in God's Name. . . . Be careful. . . . There are peasant boys in the little wood at night. . . . Robbers——"

## VI

Reb Zelig drives on for some distance, is lost to sight among the trees in the green darkness ; then he suddenly pulls up.

Reb Zelig crawls down from the waggon, and goes back alone, on foot. He has no intention to go home to sleep that night. He steals along softly until he is near the barn, and hides behind a tree. He watches Reb Lippe move about, with his stick under his arm, his red handkerchief tied about him for a girdle. He is chanting the evening prayer. Then Reb Lippe seats himself on a log, takes a purse out of his boot-upper—Reb Zelig's purse—and with delight handles the big coins for which one waits a whole lifetime. . . . Old Reb Lippe smiles, and imagines the pleasant sensation of the warmth of the hot vapour bath in his old bones.

" Ah, it is fine . . . to steam oneself, take the cold out of one's bones——" Reb Lippe thinks to himself. " The Almighty has destined me to get hold of a genuine bargain. . . . The winter is coming. . . . One has to repair one's top-boots . . . a measure of potatoes . . . pay rent. . . . One has to put by a few pieces of silver in case of need. . . . A man is not in his own hands. . . . In one's old age. . . . Thank you, dear God. . . . Oh, a great, a kind God ! "

Reb Lippe wipes his hands piously in the grass, mumbles something to himself, sighs, shakes his white old head, and begins to count the money. He passes the heavy silver pieces

from one hand to the other. Six . . . nine . . . twelve . . . eighteen.

From behind the trunk of a tree, Reb Zelig suddenly comes forward, his whip in his hand. Tall, straight, calm. Without a word, he takes the purse from Reb Lippe's hand, slowly counts the money twice over, between his fingers: "Three . . . seven . . . twelve . . . eighteen——" He puts it away in his boot-upper, and moans:

"Praised be His beloved Name——"

Both men look away, in silence.

"Oh, look! . . . There is a little squirrel, Reb Zelig. You see? Oh, look! . . . Catch it, quickly, Reb Zelig——"

Reb Lippe suddenly jumps up from the log, and strikes the tree with his stick:

"Oh, look!"

The squirrel glances fearfully out of his round, bright little eyes at the two men. Then he whisks his thick, soft, brown tail up in the air, and in the twinkling of an eye jumps from one tree top to the other.

Reb Zelig is silent; he says nothing. He sits down on the log, and with his hairy fingers kneads bits of dough in the earthenware bowl for the supper.

"Well, what is one to say to that . . . well? . . . Such an assistant. . . . Good for nothing; but when it concerns his own benefit, he is cute enough. . . . There you have a Jew. . . . Well, well——" thinks Reb Zelig, shaking his head. "What a world!——"

The evening shadows spread over the grass, like dark sheets. In the distance the trees are already black, compressed into one mass. Reb Lippe starts to walk off, and turns back:

"You hear, Reb Zelig. You have reminded me of a fine tale. . . . You may listen to it, Reb Zelig. . . . Once upon a time there was a poor man, a very poor man——"

"Eh, where?" asks Reb Zelig. He bends his ear down with his hand, and twists his mouth upwards, without curiosity.

Reb Lippe remains silent. He racks his brain to recall a tale, but in vain. There are no tales. They have all flown out of his head, like a flock of birds from a tree at which a stone has been cast. His back ■ bent, bowed down under the weight of the years which deceive continually, until the end of one's days. Extinguished, helpless, the old man's pitiful tired glances seek for something to rest on. They fix themselves on a little peasant

boy sitting under a tree, washed, blanched by the rain, a bright spot, in the yellow grass, showing clear in the radiant, red evening sun which pierces the branches with its last warmth.

"Eh, you, come here!" Reb Lippe calls to the boy. Suddenly Reb Lippe becomes quite gay, lively; snatches off his hat from his head, and straightens out the crown.

"You see, Reb Zelig," he exclaims, "the little peasant boy is here. . . . He is waiting for his cap. . . . You hear, it is Semka's boy. . . . I snatched his cap off, Reb Zelig. We ought to give him back his cap. . . . It is a pity, even if he is a Gentile. . . . He won't steal any more. . . . Some people have no luck. . . . A poverty-stricken Gentile, poor thing——"

Reb Zelig looks at him crossly, from under his thick eyebrows, and says:

"It's nice to be kind, at another man's expense. . . . Can one get anything for the cap?"

"Nothing much. . . . An old rag. . . . Maybe worth two *kreutzers*. . . . Reb Zelig, it is not worth while. . . . Give him his cap, and let him go. . . . Believe me, a man should not have envious eyes. . . . want to swallow up the whole world——"

"Here is your cap——" cries Reb Lippe. He fetches the cap from the barn, walks haughtily towards the peasant boy, places the cap carefully on his head, and thrusts an apple into his pocket, so that Reb Zelig should not see. . . .

"Here, run home quick!——"

The peasant boy begins to run, but he soon stops. He throws lumps of earth at Reb Lippe, sticks out his tongue at him, and sings a ribald little song about a Jew.

Reb Lippe bends down before the lumps of earth which fall about him, and shakes his white head sadly. But with the lumps of earth, the tales also come flying up to him.

He recalls a fine tale, and runs back trippingly to Reb Zelig, who is lying down, leaning on his elbow, staring into the darkness, his beard straggling.

"You hear, Reb Zelig. . . . Once upon a time there were two brothers; one was wise, and the other was a big fool——"

The darkness hangs in dense masses between the foliage. The first pale star is already shining through, trembling, quivering among the trees. The last peal of the church bells comes up from the village, and dies away slowly, with an autumn sadness.

A black bat moves about in a semi-circle between the thick, black branches which stand sombrely, huge, like giants, embracing one another with twisted arms, so that one is frightened to look at them.

A little fire burns feebly behind the stone, and the two old men listen with calm, satisfied expectancy to the little pot of supper on the glowing embers as it simmers and sings softly. It is already cold in the orchard at night. The air is redolent of the High Festivals, of the fragrance and the mistiness of autumn. Both men are wrapped in their long cloaks, moist, soaked with the dews of night. Their skull-caps grown dark on the tops of their heads. Reb Zelig ■ stretched out on the black grass. One half of his long, hooked nose ■ bright and red in the glare of the fire ; the other half is submerged in shadowy darkness. Near him, Reb Lippe sits on the log, his hands clasped tightly on his thick stick. He ■ telling a fine tale. His quiet, soft voice trembles and is lost in the semi-darkness, weaving into itself the sombre calm of eternity :

■ And so the beggar goes on and on. . . . You hear, Reb Zelig——”

## TARNISHED GOLD

*By* BARUCH GLASSMAN

Baruch Glassman, born in 1893 at Mozir, on the frontier between White Russia and Ukraine, of a working class family. Attended Chedar and Yeahibah, then at Kiev High School, afterwards taking technical courses. Went to America in 1911. Worked at various trades, and in 1918 took his B.A. at the State University of Ohio. Published his first story in 1913. Contributed numerous short stories to various Yiddish periodicals, including the London "Renaissance" and also to English magazines. Has published several novels. Visited Soviet Russia in 1924. Is particularly attracted by the theme of the Jewish individual living in a place where there is no Jewish environment, and tortured by Jewish feeling. He is an important figure among the younger Yiddish writers.

IN Centerville, a town of a Middle-Western state, there once lived a man ; he was not pious, and had not the fear of God in him, and in this way he resembled many other men throughout the world.

And his neighbours knew that he was not pious.

And this man was a Jew, although the dwellers of the neighbourhood in which he lived were Gentiles. But they knew not whether he was Jew or Gentile. Occasionally he would be seen entering a church on a Sunday or a Christian holiday. But no one could with certainty have asserted that he was a Christian, for he belonged to no parish.

His visits were not confined to a single Christian church. He might be seen in the Episcopalian, or the Unionist, or the Universalist, or the Catholic, or the Spiritualist, or the Baptist, or the Methodist, or the Lutheran or Presbyterian—in a word, this man worshipped all sorts of idols.

And perhaps he worshipped them not at all. Many of the church members frequently threw furtive side-glances in his direction, to notice whether or not he bowed and lowered his head during the Christian silent praying ; and in the Catholic cloisters, between the venerable grey stone walls, some silent petitioners to God, kneeling on the chilly flagstones before the marble effigies of

saints and martyrs, observed that he failed to perform the genuflexion upon entering the church, and that he failed to cross himself upon departing. But he invariably sat upright with head erect and meditative eyes that see and yet see not. And he neither knelt nor bowed.

But since they were not certain that he was a God-blaspheming man come here to scoff, but on the contrary, was meek and silent, they permitted him to come. In fact, they received him everywhere with beaming faces and hearty greetings. And in the non-Catholic churches, where the priests bear themselves in a more familiar relationship with the congregation and are not so hierarchical, they were kind to him as he departed. They would wish him a peaceful Sabbath and beg him to return.

And he did return, despite the fact that he was not pious or God-fearing, for he belonged to the ultra-modern age, and found pleasure in the beautiful religious music and the solemnity of the divine worship that gave him such peace and created for him the higher joys. And the grasping of the joys—that indeed ■ the wisdom of life to which our generation, the last, has come.

So when they sang and played the Biblical oratorios of Mendelssohn, he would fall into reverie and dream of the songs of the Levites, accompanied by a strumming of harps. And he had a feeling that once before, in some previous incarnation, garbed in a bright-coloured mantle, with a chestnut-brown beard and ■ swart olive skin, he had listened to these same songs.

And when, through the dim dark air, there rolled the low octaves of the organ peals, deeply stimulating, as the religious pieces of Haydn, Handel or Bach were being played, his heart would melt and his eyes would close. And then he would find himself in a different world. For, belonging to the ultra-modern world of men, he probably had his share of doubts, weariness and *ennui* when his whole inner being tugged and was in upheaval. That was why he loved a peace to descend upon him and calm him.

And this man was a Jew. But no one knew it save himself. Not even the Jews of the small, thinly-populated Jewish quarter of this town.

From time to time he would visit this section ; a stranger, without love and with merely a little compassion perhaps, he

would drift through the Jewish streets. He even entered the Jewish Synagogue, at times, to be received in a friendly spirit and with much ado, while all stared and wondered, gazing at his eyes and mouth, looking for the fugitive expressions flickering in his eyes, for the words he perchance might let fall, for they knew not that he was a Jew.

They offered him a prayer book and with apologetic smiles enlightened him regarding the ritual. Their whole attitude towards him betokened a desire to show submissiveness towards the stranger who had condescended to come under the shadow of their roof. Their self-annihilating effacing smile clearly said : " Do not take amiss our poverty here. . . . "

And it pained his heart that he appeared to them a stranger. He listened to them with a courteous smile. The Synagogue episode gave him a sense of alienation that weighed on him. The noise and hubbub of the worshippers, their unsabbatical deportment in the house of holiness, the uncleanness and poverty-stricken appearance of the buildings, the commonness and unholiness that pervaded the whole atmosphere—it ■ repelled him. He made a wry face and compressed his lips.

It was very seldom that he now came there. The intervals between one visit and the next grew wider—the memories paler and paler. And his strangeness stronger, keener. When he sometimes pondered on the fact that he was a Jew, it all seemed very odd and remote, like a sound long-ago fled.

And it really was odd.

For the man was not only a Jew but a Jewish writer. No one around him even suspected it, and he did not care to divulge the fact, for he knew that few heeded his writing—least of all, those for whom he wrote. It was exceedingly strange and repulsive to live among them, for their absorption in the present, their life of reality, caused his dreams to grow pallid ; by degrees he diverged from them, so that he might live a clean, Jewish life. This he now knew : true Jewishness, precisely like his writing, was a private affair. So he locked it within himself and permitted access to no one.

No one—not even his wife.

How strange !

All his days this man had longed for and dreamed of a Jewish

home. He perceived that this was all that was left to the Jew in these days. The Jewish streets and cities are being swept away by the deluge, and it is the home which we should still keep Jewish, just as in the Middle Ages, for we are really turning back to the Middle Ages.

But, as happens with all men, his private life did not realise his desires. Because of his external Gentile manner, he consorted quite exclusively with Gentiles or with Gentile-like Jews. And in a certain moment he fell in love with a girl. She was Jewish by birth but Gentile by upbringing, her ways of thought and mode of life. And when he realised what he had done, it was too late.

The thing was now too deeply entangled. To disentangle it was impossible; one could only cut it asunder. But he had no strength for this. So he let the matter drift and retired within himself still more completely.

And the woman understood not at all what was fermenting in her husband's heart and head.

Both, being moderns, easily found many things in common they could discuss, and other things to gossip about. So she did not feel the strangeness, but it hurt him all the more that he had to live a double life, a secret existence to be concealed from the one dearest to him.

And when he discovered that he was doomed in this way to drag out his days in a non-Jewish life, that everything in his home was not Jewish, that the language they used was not his language, and that his dreams and thoughts were not here—he became more and more reticent. The desire to have children died in him, knowing as he did that they would but have accentuated the sense of strangeness.

And it was fortunate that she was a modern. She, too, desired no children—for she had a more important aim in life. Only to live and experience pleasures—and that in itself was not a Jewish thought.

And thus they lived together; she, the modern, indifferent even ■ the world vanished with her; and he, the Jew of to-day, who knows that he belongs to the past.

Thus passed days and years. Life went its accustomed way, uphill and downhill. The man, living in the town of Centerville in a Middle-Western state, grew more and more alienated. His

relations with the Jewish world were fewer, more remote and distant.

And he only mixed superficially with his Gentile environment. So that once, lying awake at night on his bed, he felt that he was one man, one Jew, tossed on some far island.

He wrote more seldom. When he did write, it was of a different, fantastic, old-Jewish world, since he wished to have nothing to do with present-day Jewish life. Often, as a result, it seemed to him when writing, as if he were drawing from a solitary stone beneath the water.

And who really knows ?

One man's unhappiness is another's happiness. And one man's affliction is another's redemption.

One week-day this man walked through the streets of the town and found himself in the Jewish quarter.

He passed a candy store. Outside, near the door, stood a small paper-stand with Yiddish papers. He bought one of each and returned home.

He carried them carefully concealed under his coat, walking through the Gentile district so that no stranger eye could see them. At the time he recalled how in his childish years he had read of the maranos who secretly bought horseradish for the Passover and carried it under their cloaks to the secret places where they performed the ritual of the Seder. A great joy surged in his heart, as though he were carrying a new-born babe under his cloak; for it was a holiday to him when he managed to read a Jewish word.

And when he reached home and glanced through the pages, he saw that blood was flowing, and he saw red.

Several days elapsed before the red colour before his eyes vanished. It was light. The atmosphere, summer-golden, spread itself everywhere over the gardens of the tranquil town. The streets looked festive. And he wandered here, and he wandered there—but those unclean streets tugged at him. And when he again bought Jewish papers, he noticed at first glance that the blood no longer flowed—it gushed.

And the third time it was the same. And the fourth time, and the fifth. His eyes seemed to stare out of their sockets ; he did not want to believe that such things could be possible. It began to pierce and choke him.

But he was no more than a mere mortal. He considered : what could he help ? And if he went mad, what then ? So he gave up reading the Yiddish papers. He would at least save himself.

But nothing could help him. Always he beheld it, nevertheless, by day and by night, awake and adream.

What is there to say of his feelings ? They cannot be rendered into words, and no metaphor, no vivid painting can clearly express them.

He locked himself in his study and refused to see friends, or even to talk to his wife.

He stopped writing his beautiful dream works, which were like little white houses glimpsed through trees in a valley. Now ■ not the time for such things, he told himself.

And when once, his heart being very heavy, he tried to enter a church, he perceived, with pain and disappointment, that the former peace no longer settled on him. A great terror seized him, his eyes stared as if they were in a death agony. And though a red film, he saw a mob descending on him from the altar. They were bearing, thrust on gun pieces, severed heads, dripping blood, like the paintings of the head of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth.

So he fled the church. Like spears the hostile eyes of the worshippers pursued him, eyes that before had looked on him so friendly. He could no longer look them straight in the face, for he now saw what was hidden behind their countenances. And he knew that a time would come when they would show their real selves, which now but few could see.

He filled sheets of paper with his writings, wherein he let his heart speak freely and his anger spill out ; he wrote many thoughts, gave his advice on what should be done now to stop the slaughter and annihilation.

And this writing was printed in a Jewish periodical in the far-off city of New York. It created a sensation. For a while it foamed and fermented there, a white froth on the surface of the night sea, but it instantly broke and ceased to be. His voice was drowned among the thousand other voices, and helped no one, save perhaps himself.

Blood continued to flow and did not stop. And when he beheld this, he secluded himself even more determinedly. Angrily he

burned all his manuscripts ; with an execration he scattered their ashes to the wind. And began his travellings—in his own room.

He watched through long nights and languished through days ; he trod tortuous paths on the floor of his room and of his phantasies.

After many days had elapsed, he came forth from his room. His wife, who with increasing fear had noticed that something was amiss, now saw with joy that her husband's face was less troubled, calmer, though quite pale and drawn.

So she, too, was content. On the house settled a series of quiet, shut-in days.

And when, one of these days, he called to his wife : " I say, let us move to the Jewish quarter," she gazed with astonishment and wonderment, as if he had lost his senses. For their home was really so clean and polished, and stood in a quiet, aristocratic, exclusive neighbourhood. And the Jewish streets were noisy and dirty, and so narrow that each had to tread on his neighbour's feet.

And he considered that she was after all his wife, and that it would be difficult to carry out all his wishes at one time. He sighed bitterly, but consoled himself with the thought that if he could not go to the Jewish streets, he would bring the Jewish streets to his home.

And he did so.

One day, on the silent and alien streets, came sounds of small hammer blows issuing from the Jew's house, as if some building were going on. The Jew was nailing mezuzas on the doors. And on the walls he hung pictures of the Gaon of Vilna ; and the Rav, and the Rabbi dressed in linen ; and he nailed pictures of the Holy Temple, and the Sacrifice of Isaac, and Mizrachim, and pictures showing how the Korbon Pesach was sacrificed ; and similar pictures, sewed with multi-coloured threads on cloth ; all the things he could recollect when he burrowed into the farthest vanished times, and which could only be purchased in New York.

And over the entrance door he cut a square bare place in the wall ; it stood out prominently like a huge black mouth, a remembrance of the Destruction. And out of the house he threw all the rubber plants and begonias, geraniums, tiger rose, and cherry trees. And in their stead, near the windows, he introduced paper flower-pots, and tiny century plants in earthen pots.

And into his own writing-room he brought grotesque-looking folios written in a language his wife could not comprehend, in a script that seemed wild to her—"Chinese" she called it. These books were so huge that they could not be put into the bookshelves. They destroyed the harmony of the furniture and tainted the atmosphere with the musty odour of old neglected books that had been kept closed for long stretches of time. Here, over the large Talmudic treatises and midroshim, reading by a tallow candle, he sat through many a night, crooning to himself a melancholy tune.

And the woman with terror saw that her man had grown mad. She was afraid to tell her great unhappiness to her relatives and friends, for such a malady was quite unknown. So she kept it to herself. She took precautions that the nearby neighbours should see nothing, for it was now autumn, and the leaves of the trees that faced the study had already fallen.\* Through the bare branches penetrated the autumn air, and silent men passed by the window.

Through long unbearable days she trembled with uneasiness.

But the man no longer paid attention to her, for he was deeply absorbed. Perhaps he had decided that she was not really his wife, since they had not been married by Jewish ritual. He isolated himself from her, and no longer came to her room. He would fall asleep over the ponderous volumes in his study, joining himself to the words that rang in his ears just as he went into the dreams immediately preceding sleep, like far-off soft voices on summer highways.

And when the woman saw that he was estranged from her, she too grew estranged from him, and spent her evenings in town. Now she came home late at night, or at early dawn, when blueness is spilled from the south-east into the night; weary and spent she would fling herself into bed.

And just then, in that hour before daybreak, the Jew would arise, perform the ritual of nail-washing, and say the necessary benediction; he would eat nothing, but go direct with rapid steps to the Synagogue, there to pray with the pious.

And when he came there for the first time and asked the beadle to bring him a praying-shawl and phylacteries, the beadle stared at him, and could not believe his own eyes. But when he listened to him speaking Jewish, he thought:

"This man must be an apostate, who has come here to the

Synagogue on the anniversary of the death of his mother or father."

For it is told of such men that on such day a flame burns in the apostate's heart.

The beadle handed him shawl and phylacteries, and inquired :

"Can you say Kaddish alone, or would you like someone to say it for you?"

Quietly the Jew answered :

"Each day is now yahrzeit to me."

The beadle wondered with great wonder, and all the Jews stared, and for a long time the Jewish quarter was full of gossip about him.

And by degrees the Jews around him perceived that this man really was a Jew ; and when they learned this, the bustle ceased. They lost all interest in him, and said to each other, with shrugs of the shoulder :

"Well, he is just one of us . . . just a Jew like all of us. What is all this fuss about ? . . . Nyeh, another Jew !"

And they began to look at him with suspicious eyes, as if he wished to rob them of something. For with his coming the narrow quarters had grown narrower.

And they regretted that they had, once, gone on their hands and knees to him, "since he is, after all, only one of us !" They conceived a hatred for him, because he had not told them in the beginning that he was a Jew, and they in their ignorance had shown him honour.

But this same Jew who lived in the city of Centerville in a Middle-Western state, took it ■■■ good-naturedly, for he realised that it was his due. The Jews turned away from him, and he turned away from the Gentiles. He lived like one in solitude. But he blessed God that at last he was on the way to wholeness and peace.

Thus passed days and months and years. He was separated by a partition from the life close by. A warm, peaceful film encircled his soul. And what was happening about him no longer concerned him ; and he noticed nothing.

Now a Friday evening descended on the world. The streets were quiet. The stores were closed. He heard no sounds from the street. A holiness pervaded the air. And the Jew clothed

himself in his Sabbath clothes, and was ready to go to the Synagogue.

Suddenly he looked around—no one was saying prayers on kindling the candles in his home. Why not? It was high time for candle prayers.

He approached and questioned his wife.

"Why do you not say the candle prayers? The sun is already half-set!"

And his wife, familiar with his strange ideas, placed the cut-glass candlesticks on the table and lit the candles, and covered her face with her hands, and remained silent in front of them. She recalled that she had once seen her mother do so. It had been a beautiful ceremony and harmed nobody.

And as the man looked at her standing so quietly with closed eyes over the little flame, the bodily form of his wife vanished. He saw peering through the openings of her fingers, a sly face, a face strangely like his own—but painted with rouge and powdered.

"You, why are you making yourself so ridiculous? What is this pose about? I am not a Jewish daughter and you are not a Jew. I know your weaknesses so well, your sins, which are many. . . . Why deceive yourself?"

And a great terror fell on the man, terror at seeing this strange woman, with the face that looked like an image of his own. Quickly he hurried from the house. But before he could manage to close the door behind him, he heard his wife in an outbreak of laughter. And the laughter haunted him as he descended the steps, and all along the way to the Synagogue—the laughter of a frightful bird of night.

It was late when he returned home. No one awaited him. His wife had left to spend the night in town. The lights were burning lonely in the glass holders. And when he began pacing his room, singing "Peace Be with Thee," the words came from his mouth and froze, and he heard no sound, for in his ears rang the laughter of his wife during the candle prayers. The quiet sabbatical air was no longer quiet—it re-echoed continuously, as in a sea-shell. And from these echoes, the fragile palace in which he had recently lived, crumbled, and his eyes suddenly opened. Before him lay the fragments of glass in which the splendour of the Sabbath lights was reflected—red and hushed.

And on that Friday night he locked himself once more in his room. Hour after hour he paced to and fro and thought incessantly. At last he said to himself :

" This wife of mine is a stranger to me, and will remain so all my life. How can I have a Jewish home when my nearest one is a stranger ? And yet this is a part of my life and a constant reminder of my previous waywardness. God give me strength to cut her out of my life, to cut this tumour out of my body."

And he strengthened himself. About midnight he quietly muttered to himself :

" It is midnight. I must perform the ceremony of chatzos."

He stole out of the room on tiptoe and went to his wife's room.

A phosphorescent blue flash from the electric pole of a passing street-car penetrated the room. For a moment it lit up the bed and the pallid, abandoned face of his wife. She stirred restlessly in her sleep, heating herself with dreams of sin and abandonment. From the distant streets came the noise of crowds returning from theatres.

And then it darkened again. And in the darkness shimmered the edge of a chafef. A streamlet of blood covered the white sheets and fell on the floor, as the man drew the blade across his wife's throat. The blood fell on the floor in a red path.

And then he seized the body by the hair and dragged it across the floor into his room. There he covered it with a black tablecloth, laid candlesticks all around the head, and lit the candles. Very contentedly he smiled :

" Now she will no longer laugh."

And then he sat down near by his wife's body, and with broken heart began to perform the midnight ceremony.

The silent night heard his prayer :

" God, forgive my sin.

" I have estranged myself from Thee, Thy commandments, and Thy race.

" And I have looked on them like a lord upon his slaves, as a rich man on the unclean.

" And I have not suffered the afflictions that they suffered.

" And I held myself above them, for I knew the ways of the Gentiles.

"And have I not, in the depths of my soul, with longing, sadness and envy, often said to myself: 'If I had but been born a Gentile'?"

"Lord, in Thy great mercy, forgive me. Until now, I knew Thee not.

"I did not visit the churches for Thy sake, to give praise to Thy name, but only for my own sake, for my own pleasure, and pleasure after all is pleasure, be it of the body or of the spirit.

"When weary of the pleasures of sin and abandonment, I relished the quiet delights of pious tranquillity and religious ecstasy—that later I might more sharply taste the delights of sin.

"God, I ask forgiveness of Thee.

"Thou alone art for ever and aye.

"I will not inquire into Thy ways, nor examine Thy deeds.

"And I await no rewards for my serving Thee, neither in this world nor the next.

"Lord, forgive me, I am neither first nor last.

"With a full heart I turn now to Thee, a broken and beaten man.

"And for my sins, I have brought Thee a sacrifice—flesh of my flesh and blood of my blood.

"To Thee I return my worldly happiness and distinction. Return to me my peace and wholeness."

And the night was still and no one answered from the stillness.

. . . . .

At the break of day, with the first cock-crow and the blue dawn there was the click of a key in the keyhole. His wife was returning from her night of revelry. And when she saw her husband seated on the floor, and in front of him an outspread black cloth, surrounded by burning candles, she at first stepped back, terrified. But soon, thinking that this, too, must be some odd Jewish custom, she broke out into loud laughter at such queer ideas.

But the Jew still sat over the corpse of his wife, and did not see the form behind him, tall and slender and young, in her black satin dress that made her look taller, softly draw off her long silk gloves from her powdered, pale arms. And while she laughed loudly.

## MAGDA

By I. J. SINGER

*Translated by HANNAH BERMAN*

Israel Joshua Singer, born in Poland, November, 1893. Son of a well-known Polish Rabbi. Studied Talmud and Jewish religious lore in the Yeshibah till the age of seventeen. Then became an external student at the University, read a lot in Hebrew and Yiddish, took to drawing, and worked for a time as a clerk and as a manual worker. Began writing Hassidic tales in 1915. Worked as a proof reader for the Yiddish Press and did many translations. Several short stories published in 1920 attracted attention, and he rapidly achieved a reputation as one of the most important of the younger Yiddish writers. His works, "Cobwebs," and "World-Woes," hold a high place in modern Yiddish literature. His play, "Yoshe Kalb," is the great 1932-33 success of the Yiddish stage, produced by Maurice Schwartz at the Yiddish Art Theatre in New York.

### I

WHEN Voytzyech Pyotrushak, of Dombrovka, after a violent ■ of coughing, saw spots of blood in the spittle, for the first time, he did not go off to the doctor to be cured, nor did he go to the apothecary for herbs.

"No wife, no son," he said to himself. "Let that happen which is according to the Divine Will."

He crawled up on to the wide stove, dried his tobacco, smoked it in his pipe, and coughed. And his only daughter, Magda, pulled on his top-boots, cut the field with a man's scythe, drove the plough, harnessed the horse, traded with the Jewish itinerant pedlars; and she spun linen, cooked for herself and her ailing father, and for the fowls and animals.

Magda was over twenty years of age, healthy, ruddy-faced, broad-shouldered, hardened. From childhood, she herself had had to rear the geese and pigs, cows and horses; herself had to give a young peasant a clout in the jaw, because he had allowed his animals to stray into their field; herself had to draw innumerable pails of water from the deep well for all the animals, and

many times ride home on the mare, without a bridle, merely holding on to the thick mane. She had never had a brother to take her part. And she grew up sturdy, big and hard, so that Dombrovka was afraid of her. Sometimes, when an animal strayed into Voytzyech's corn, and Magda caught it, nothing would help. The owner had to pay a rouble to redeem it.

"Yes, yes," they used to say in the village. "Magda will not let you get away with it, she will stick to the beast till it dies, unless you pay."

Magda was docile, silent and obedient. Voytzyech, her father, treated her badly, maybe because she never asked him to help her, but managed everything herself, which he regarded as a slight on his honour as the master of the house. He thought to himself :

"If you know everything, go and bang your head against the wall."

Or maybe it was because she was always at work, never could find time to drive with him to the village, or visit neighbours which might have saved him having to hear the villagers say that he had a very crude daughter.

"Talks with a little squeal, Voytzyech's daughter," he wanted folks to comment, "says 'Papasha' just like a lady's daughter, and has to be assisted into the waggon—so refined she is. . . ."

Anyhow, he was not good to her, and regarded with indifference the fact that the girl toiled from the rise of the morning star until the night star was in the sky, doing men's and women's work.

In her own heart Magda had plenty of complaints against her father. She saw how, in cases like hers, or when a peasant grew old, a young man was introduced into the household. The girl's father goes off to the village, to the clerk, to make over his property ; then he goes off to the church, there is a wedding, and then he betakes himself to the stove, where he repairs harness or patches fur jerkins. The father unyokes the horse when the young couple return from the tavern on a Sunday, and. . . . Later, a grandchild begins to grow up. That was how folks lived. She knew it. But she said nothing. Worked and ate—nothing more.

Often peasants came and urged :

"Voytzyech, you are sinning. Young men in the village are pulling us to bits. Go to Voytzyech with brandy," they say.

"Voytzyech, don't be obstinate. The girl needs a young man. The same potatoes, the same dripping ; and the property will look different. And don't let the girl work like a horse, so that one has to pity her."

Voytzyech would knock his pipe on the stove, but wouldn't budge :

"I don't want to. I am ill. They will have no use out of me ; and they will hang a wallet about me, and send me to the church to beg."

Many times, when Voytzyech ran short of tobacco, Magda would have to leave everything to the four winds, mount Lyolek, ride off to Leibush, the shopkeeper, get him to fill the dried bladder, and bring it back. And sometimes Voytzyech would recall the good old times when his "old woman" was alive, and he used to "air" her limbs with a rope ; and pay out to Magda what he felt he would have owed her mother.

Magda knew in her heart that the time had arrived when she ought to be flogged by a husband and not by a father. But she was docile and silent. She wept as her mother used to do, wiped her eyes with the ends of her apron, and went off to the meadow, shielded her eyes with her hand, cast her glances over the level ground, and shook her head :

"Surely everything is going to rack and ruin ! Jesus, Mary, everything !"

But, above all, Magda's heart bled for Lyolek, whom Voytzyech had taken in hand. Lyolek was a horse belonging to Voytzyech, well known in Dombrovka, and the whole district for miles around. And Magda loved him with all the love that existed in her strong peasant heart, which had no other being on whom to expend itself.

The one-year-old Lyolek was the darling of ■ the mares and their owners. He had a glossy, velvety brown hide, and a narrow, straight, human-flesh-coloured patch right across his long, proud head. He was lithe and slender, had an ample, strong neck and powerful flanks that swung flexibly on a pair of thin, chiselled legs. He had clever, impudent eyes, stiff, aggressive ears, quivering wild nostrils ; a strong, wavy mane, and snow-white rings encircling his fetlocks. And, conscious of his beauty, conceited because of his success with the mares about him, he was not satisfied with merely pawing holes in the ground, and

getting excited over every trifle, but loved to play pranks, have some fun out of the other horses. . . . Or he would take a nip at a man's ear or nose, with his white teeth. . . .

Magda saw that her father was beginning to cast his eyes too frequently at Lyolek, that he wanted to trade him ; and she felt so much blood rushing up into her head and face with rage that she thought she was going to burst in a moment, and would be covered entirely with blood.

Peasants often came to them, and talked of Lyolek :

" You have a horse there, Voytzyech, which will outdo all the horses belonging to the gentry round about."

Voytzyech used to prick up his long, thin ears with their sharp points ; a sickly smile would spread over his face, and he would mutter :

" You could have one like that, neighbour, if you paid three roubles for it. . . ."

And the peasants used to answer : " We shall not quarrel about that, Voytzyech," and Magda would go to the stable, snuggling her flaxen-white head into Lyolek's mane, and rebel against her father :

" So young, Lyolek, so young—hardly a year old. It is too soon. We must not. I object. . . ."

She dreamt, Magda did, that he would grow up, big and strong, like the nobleman's Kseni. And why not ? Surely he was his son, Kseni's own son. She remembered it very clearly, did Magda. It happened one Sunday, two summers ago. They had not yet sold Lyolek's mother. At that time she, Magda, had hobbled the mare's forelegs, and pastured her at the end of the meadow which was bounded by the nobleman's extensive fields. The mare was not at all a bad sort, but a peasant's mare, smallish built, and heavy-footed—a short head and a chestnut mane coming down over her eyes. She, Magda, had just stayed on the grass ; knew nothing. And all at once, the nobleman's Kseni leaped over the fence, into the meadow, and made straight for the hobbled mare. The boys belonging to the estate tried to drive him off ; but he neighed and pawed. . . . The mare was frightened, only just managed to hold herself up on her hobbled legs. The boys shouted, and were doubled up with laughter :

" Heh, heh, Magda, heh, heh ! . . ."

She led the mare home by the mane. In due time, the mare

became lazier and stouter, and gave birth to a foal handsomer than any on the nobleman's estate.

"Just like Kseni," Magda used to say to herself, seeing him grow day by day. "Maybe he will grow bigger than Kseni."

She tended him, stayed with him at night in his stall, had assisted at his birth, took him with her wherever she took his mother. "Let him suckle another little while . . ." And later on, when he grew bigger, and whisked his tail in the air on hearing the whinny of a mare in the distance, Magda used to run after him, drag him back with all her strength, by the mane, so that he should not begin too early. . . . The peasant boys used to laugh, choke with laughter :

"Heh, heh, Magda, heh, heh !"

But she did not look round. She believed she could hold Lyolek until he was two years old ; and suspected nothing. But her father did not have God in his heart, and offered him to all the peasants :

"Three roubles, neighbours."

At first she tried to dissuade him, and said softly, lowering her head :

"I don't want him sold yet, father. He is hardly a year old. . . ."

But Voytzyech knocked his pipe on the stove :

"I will show you what you want or don't want. I am master, I. Everything is mine, as long as I draw breath. I want to leave nothing behind me after I am dead. Let him fade out along with me, the 'bastard.'"

She said no more. She knew his obstinacy. He would not give way even to the nobleman. More than once the steward came to him :

"Voytzyech, Dombrovka is laughing. The nobleman will let you have a few acres of land at the boundary, and give him Lyolek. Voytzyech, the nobleman, will have none of Kseni's breed with a peasant. . . . Let him have the horse. . . ."

But the old man refused :

"Always had quarrels about the boundaries. Forbidden to enter the estate. Let him know, the gentleman, that he is dealing with Voytzyech Pyotrushak. . . ."

She knew his obstinacy, and with aching heart, did as he bade her to.

The peasants used to take note of Voytzyech's words, repeat them one to another. And peasant boys positively had their arms torn out dragging the whinnying mares after them, to Voytzyech's stable.

"Magda, go out," Voytzyech would shout to her from his place on the stove, on hearing the whinny of a mare when she saw Lyolek's head over the stable door. "Go out, and do not take less than three roubles. . . ."

Magda would slouch along on her thick legs, rattle her keys, and listen to the neighing of the wild Lyolek and the whinnying of the writhing mare.

Magda rattled her keys, and muttered :

"Three roubles, nothing less. . . ."

And on the other side of the fence stood the young peasants, winking from under the peaks of their caps that they wore pulled down over their foreheads, and shouting :

"Heh, heh, Magda, heh, heh ! . . ."



Voytzyech clutched more frequently now at his heart, stared at the blood-stained handkerchief, and knocked his pipe on the stove :

"Magda, I want some tobacco ! Magda, you are not giving me anything to eat ! Magda, you want to poison me ! Magda, go out to the stable, and don't take less than three roubles !"

Voytzyech was in a rage. He felt death coming upon him ; saw how every creature about him was in good health, fresh—everything was going on as usual, just as in the days before he became ill—just as when he went about everywhere, put his hands and his brains to everything. He could not bear the thought that he was dying, and he gnawed with his teeth at whatever came to his hand. He was most furious of all with Lyolek, so he ordered the stable door to be opened more and more frequently. Lyolek did not know Voytzyech. Magda had reared him all by herself. And for this reason, he sometimes tried to play with Voytzyech's ear, or pluck at the collar of his curly, sheep-skin jacket. He would allow Magda to get up on his back, curry-comb his belly, and remove the sticky dirt from his wild nostrils. And Voytzyech used to knock his pipe angrily on the stove, in his rage against

Magda and the lordly "bastard," and, clutching his sickly chest, he spat out blood and gall in one :

"Chech ! . . . Chech ! . . . Chech ! . . . My own horse drives me out. . . . Chech ! . . . Chech ! . . . Chech ! . . . Magda is mistress . . . Magda . . ."

For days on end she was busy with men's and women's work. Her father ordered her to stew for him certain leaves in water. At every sound he thought there was a mare being brought in, and he gave Magda no peace. "Go out, Magda, go out. . . ." On top of this, gypsies had come to the village. Some of them passed the fence, and rolled their glittering black pupils over the whites of their eyes, and whispered something to each other. Magda did not understand the gypsy language ; but she realised that the gypsies were casting their eyes in the direction of Lyolek, and that they might cut the iron bar, and steal him. So she slept in the stable every night.

During the day she had no time to think ; but at night, lying in the stable, and inhaling the fresh manure and the healthy odour of the horse, her passionate blood began to run riot ; and she used to dream of the young men at the fair, in their big, high, loose-edged top-boots, the mouth-organs under their flaxen moustaches. And sometimes she would bury her flaxen-white head in Lyolek's mane, fling her two arms about his strong, warm neck, and cover the human-flesh-coloured patch on his head with hot, passionate kisses. Lyolek, delighted with Magda's caresses, would stick out his elastic tongue, lick her red hands, and look straight into her eyes through his own clever, impudent ones, shaking his smooth, pliant neck, like one who understands his own worth as a male. Magda would bury her fingers in his thick mane. Lyolek snorted powerfully through his wild, flexible nostrils, and Magda blushed more and more. . . .

Days and years passed over Dombrovka. Voytzyech put his hand up to his heart more frequently than ever, and spat into his red handkerchief. Only a few patches were left of his great, powerful lungs that were not rotted away now. Magda's hands, feet and bust developed more fully. Her cheeks grew redder and softer, and her eyes narrower and smaller. Lyolek's descendants were now commanding five-rouble pieces ; while Lyolek himself stayed in his stable, worn-out and dejected. No one thought now of bringing him their mares. Nevertheless, his

master, lying on the stove, was always in a temper with him and Magda, and always imagining that a mare was whinnying outside the gate ; and he kept muttering, although no one was listening to him :

" Magda, go out to the stable. Don't take less than three roubles. . . ."

Magda still led him out to the meadow, tried to catch him by the mane, so that he should not go to the pasturing mares, without her receiving payment. Everything was as it used to be. But Lyolek was thin and aged, exhaustion showed in his proud back now bent, his knees that thrust themselves forward. His lower lip drooped, his ribs showed through his sides, like hoops. He would try to neigh in a young voice, and fling up his heels, with his old haughtiness. But the mares had long ceased to fear him. Young herds slashed him over the legs with common swine-whips ; and because he still tried to go through the usual tricks of the fair—still tried to play with other horses, or seize hold of an ear between his teeth, the peasants did not allow him on the village fields, and invented evil stories about him :

" Lyolek is mad," they would say. " He must not be allowed near the sound horses."

Magda still caressed him at night, moistened his mane with her tears, kissed him on the patch and threw her arms about his neck. But he would turn away from her. And afterwards Magda would roll herself up in the hay, and stare at him through guilty eyes.

It was she who so often rattled the keys to him, and opened the stable.

Winter came down upon Dombrovka. The thick snow covered the indifferent straw roofs and the fields. Peasants sat quietly around blazing fires, soaking into themselves the pungent odours of the barrels of pickled cabbage and sizzling lard, yawning lazily and comfortably, as they listened to horrible tales. And no one would have removed the level drift of snow in the village, if Voytzyech had not stretched himself out on the stove, stomach down and back up, so that at every fit of coughing, balls of dust and soot were swept upwards, and covered the ceiling. Magda yoked Lyolek to the sledge, fetched the priest ; neighbours came in, bared their heads, and, helpless with the fear of death, had their prayers on the tips of their tongues, ready to utter them aloud.

After a few days of groaning and coughing, the priest appeared in the village with the sacramental oils. Voytzyech was no longer lying on the stove, but on the bed, robed in a white shirt, staring calmly out of his dark eyes. By this time, he was so close to death that he had no longer any thought of being angry with the living. He only stared in amazement at the yellow, lighted candles, and at the terrified and helpless faces of the people about him.

The peasants chanted prayers. The priest's voice was heard above all the other voices, muttering in his deep bass :

"Beat your breast, Voytzyech !"

Voytzyech lifted his hand so many times over his sunken breast until he could not lift it any more. Magda and the neighbours dropped down on their knees, and for a long time prayed for his soul.

Magda did not cry, but behaved like a son ; drove off to order the coffin, made arrangements with the priest. She greased thoroughly the ancient, dried-up top-boots which Voytzyech had not worn for a very long time, and washed his white coat.

On Sunday, Lyolek was yoked to the sledge on which they placed the yellow-painted coffin with its metal cross. The people trudged through the snow, over fields and roads, bared their heads under the falling white flakes, moved along seriously, full of secret dread of all-powerful death which hovered over chimneys and roofs, and dropped down wherever he liked. They chanted psalms, one after the other.

Magda was silent. She watched them lowering the coffin into the snow-bedecked grave ; watched them dragging out the ropes by which the box had been lowered ; watched them shovelling the hard earth on to the grave ; and afterwards she drove straight home with the people, drank brandy with the neighbours, one glass after the other, and listened with satisfaction to their praises of her :

"Just like a son, not a woman at all. . . ."

### III

The snow covered up the last remaining traces of Voytzyech. A frost came, sharpened to spears the naked branches and twigs. A thick steam poured out frequently from the narrow, open doors

of the little houses. Peasants yoked horses to waggons ; peasant women ornamented themselves with 'kerchiefs and scarves, tied long strings to pigs' legs, and went off to the Christmas-eve fair at a near-by village.

Magda, the mistress of ten acres of land, a house, stables, several beasts and pigs, felt herself in a strong position. She was free of the yoke of her father. All the work was now in her own hands ; she comprehended to the full what freedom meant, and how much power she had over her property after those long years of submission. She took down her father's red, fur coat, and drew it about herself ; tied up her money in a handkerchief which she thrust into her bosom ; yoked Lyolck to the sledge ; and drove off to the fair for the first time in her life. The frost made her red cheeks glow ; the sledge creaked in the snow ; and she was happy.

"Ten acres of land and a household ! . . ."

And she saw herself moving about the fair, buying, selling whatever she wished, thrusting her hand into her bosom whenever she felt like calculating. And the peasants kept lifting their hands, ready to clap them together to clinch a bargain.

"Clap your hands on it, mistress. It does not suit a woman of so much property to drive so hard a bargain. . . ."

At the tavern she drank and danced ; and afterwards drove home. There was a young man with her, whose arm was embracing her tightly, so that she should not roll off the little sledge. He drives swiftly, does the young man ; outraces everybody. He is carrying a pair of new top-boots with loose uppers slung across his shoulders. Under his moustache, a mouth-organ moves up and down. Peasants get out of his way, so swiftly does he drive. The bell tinkles. He squeezes her so tightly that she begins to cry out :

"O, Jesus, Jesus. . . . You will break one of my ribs. . . ."

Afterwards they would drive to church, people would dance, and women would tell her scandalous things. And then she would find herself alone in the house with the young man. The young man wants her to drink some brandy. She won't drink it. He forces it down her throat. And it gets dark in the house. He has such strong arms ; and she is hitting him for a joke wherever she can get at him. And . . . "Heh, woman, where are you going. . . . ?"

A whip cracked out. Lyolek plunged. The little sledge turned over ; and Magda sprawled full length in the snow, caught between waggons and men and women.

The snow cooled off her passionate dreams. She waited a while, for a young man to bend down, and catch hold of her around the waist, and lift her up :

" Over here with the woman. . . ."

But the peasant boys laughed ; one young fellow in a light, city coat, and wearing a red embroidered scarf, half-peasant, half-idler, winked his eyes, and shouted in the voice of a conjuror driving off the scamps with a leather belt :

" Oh, oh, oh ! . . . Tell Lyolek. He will lift you up ! . . ."

" Chi, chi, chi ! " A powerful laugh thundered out, as though some dried-up casks had exploded.

Magda set the sledge upright, and drove to the fair.

All day long Magda strolled about among the dense masses of people and beasts. She walked all around the little tables. She wanted to buy something. But just as a little while ago she had felt free and happy because she could, at any moment, thrust her hand into her bosom, and draw out her knotted handkerchief, so now she wanted someone to lead her about the fair, select this here, that there, even argue with her, prevent her from buying things, so long as the guide continued to lead her about from table to table, bargaining with the merchants, examining the things, and each time ordering her to stand up :

" Well, try it on, Magda. It will suit you. . . ."

She dragged herself along through the sea of coloured 'kerchiefs and beads, examining everything around her. And she was annoyed with the dealers because they did not take her for an unmarried woman, but called her " Miasus," as though she were married.

Later on, there did come up to her an elderly peasant, a friend of her father's. He took her to the tavern, and had a drink with her. But here, too, she saw the young man in the light city coat and the red scarf. He did not stop making jokes about her and Lyolek. When the people had gulped down some more drink, mouth-organs came out, and peasant girls and boys began to swing on their hips, one against the other, as though they sought to excite each other's passions. Peasants came up to Magda, too, and caught her round the waist, and began stamping their feet.

But they were elderly men ; and their wives soon came up and dragged them away by the scruff of their neck :

" Hi, hi, my fine fellow. . . . I'll teach you to carry on with girls, you old scamp ! "

The young man with the red scarf seemed to be in all places at once. He flew swiftly from corner to corner, twirled around, right and left, like a bird in the middle of a little heap of corn. And he flashed a pair of twinkling, hungry eyes all around him.

He did queer tricks. A peasant had poured out a glass of brandy for himself, the other snatched it up in a second, poured it down his throat, and bowed like a clown. Again, he made a pretence of having collided with a peasant girl by accident ; and pulled himself up, with a finger on his forehead, like a sort of retired drummer. At first the peasants did not understand what sort of a scamp he was, and looked at him with suspicious eyes. He instantly realised his position ; so he went up to Magda, held his head between both hands, and cried out, very slyly :

" Heh, heh, Magda ! . . . "

The peasants immediately forgot their suspicions, and laughed until the tears rolled down their cheeks.

" Oh, what a scamp. . . . He can make one die of laughing. . . . "

A peasant came up to Magda and suggested that she should exchange Lyolek with him for his horse. The young man was standing a little way off, and no one so much as thought of laughing ; but in the twinkling of an eye, he was back near Magda, bowing on all sides, and winking his hungry eyes :

" Don't buy him, Kumi. He not only won't work, but you will have to give him your old woman in the bargain. . . . "

The boys literally jumped at each other in their delight ; and one, a village drunkard, a beggar, whom Voytzyech used to refuse to allow near his fields because he would steal the potatoes, was so enchanted with the joke that he ran over to Magda quickly, and scraped her face with his prickly chin. Magda gave him a blow in the teeth, so that he dropped ; and in their extreme hilarity, the peasant boys caught hold of their knees, and almost collapsed on the floor :

" Oh, how she will flay her husband ! . . . Oh . . . "

Magda sat down in a corner, and looked about her. The

tavern was full, packed with peasants, young men and girls. She knew a lot of them. How long is it since they were only so high? She remembered, Magda did. She used to meet them tending geese on the common. Now they were going about with men, pulling at their sleeves, shouting:

"You have guzzled enough! . . ."

And they themselves had a few drinks. Others again, only just grown up, were swinging on their hips, every now and then flinging their skirts up in the air, carrying on with sweethearts, and sucking long sticks of toffee.

"Married, betrothed," Magda wondered. "But when, where ——" And where had she, Magda, been? She had never attended a wedding in the village, never driven off to the fair, never gone to the tavern on a Sunday, only toiled from sunrise to sunset for the old cougher; slept in the stable, like a dog in a kennel, rattled her keys. And on the other side of the fence young men used to stand, laughing in their fists, winking from under the peaks of their tilted caps:

"Heh . . . heh . . . Magda . . . heh . . . heh . . . heh! . . ."

She no longer heard the little peasant who had wanted to swap horses with her; nor did she hear the screams of the old women who were railing at the young man in the red scarf:

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you drunkard. . . . God will punish you for making fun of the poor orphan. . . ."

She left the tavern quickly; removed the nose-bag from Lyolek's head, and made for home.

Lyolek's day had been no happier than Magda's. He too had attempted a love affair, and had received lashes across the legs. He was angry, savage, and he stepped along nervously.

Night fell with the swiftness of the winter. All alone, Magda swung backwards and forwards in the empty sledge, listening to the joyful voices of the drunken young people which spread from the village to the fields. The sledge made its way under the even rows of spear-edged trees, creaking in the frozen snow.

Magda sat with her head resting on her chest, thinking of her lonely little house standing by itself amid white-clad fields; of the coming Christmas festivities; of the long, long winter nights, and the big roomy bed. . . .

The sledge glided along, tilted on one side, as though it required someone else to keep it balanced by his weight. And Magda

kept her eyes fixed on the thin, blurred shadow of Lyolek on the white snow. The sledge entered the dark forest. The last drunken shouts came floating over the distance, ran about among the snow-capped tops of the pines, awoke terrifying echoes, and presently vanished for ever among the tall, silent trees.

## FOR THE SAKE OF A LIFE

By MYER EDELBAUM

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

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THE village lay wrapped in slumber at the foot of the tree-covered hill. The Angel of Sleep flew down from his place in the heavens, into the village, with its narrow, dirty streets. He flew from street to street, from house to house, lulling the inmates to rest upon their beds, and weaving about them a network of dreams, some soothing, some terror-striking, spinning them from a huge ball of dream-stuff. It has been thus for generations, for centuries, since the day when the first man settled there, and life began. Each night the Angel of Sleep has come to do his mission, lulling the village folk to rest, weaving dreams about them. And when the Angel of Sleep has done his work, he unfolds his great white wings, and rises up high, returning to his place in the heavens. With three mighty beats of his wings he has risen through all the worlds, and is back in his place, ready to chant there his morning song of praise to the Lord God.

All the houses in the village are bolted and shuttered, huddled together in sleep. The streets are hushed; no sound is heard, except from time to time the deep breathing of a man exhausted by the day's hard toil. And soon this, too, is merged and lost in the dark depths of the night.

But this night the Angel of Sleep found it impossible to accomplish his mission. There were two houses in the village where life refused to be lulled to rest, and no matter how much he tried to bring slumber upon them, it was of no avail. So at last he

left them and flew back into the heavens, and in two houses in the village life went on.

One was situated in a narrow, poor street, lying alongside the river. A sound of moaning and wailing rose from it. Within lay a woman in child-birth, and every moment her moaning grew more faint. And as it grew fainter, the louder rose the sound of wailing and the cries of those that stood about her. There were her children standing by her bed, while their mother wrestled with the Angel of Death. Then suddenly her aged mother seized the children by the hand and ran with them towards the House of Prayer, to plead and to supplicate for the life of her daughter, the children's mother.

The House of Prayer was steeped in the shadows of the half-light. At the huge table sat three wise men, studying the Zohar by the feeble light of the candles. Great shadows jumped and flickered upon the walls, smaller shadows leapt among them. It seemed as if they were chasing each other, and the shadows which ran about in the half-darkened House of Prayer, and the hushed whisperings of the sages merged together in one great mystery, and cast a spell of awe over everything.

Who were they? Whence came they? No one could say. None of the Hassidim knew. However much they tried to find out, they could discover nothing about them. They did not even know their names. And if ever they spoke to the Rabbi about it, he gave them no answer, only shrugged his shoulders. They had to be content with knowing that one of them was the oldest, that there was a younger and one who was the youngest, although they were all three of a great age. They had been there for many years, studying with the Rabbi the profound mysteries of the Holy Law, poring day and night over the Sacred Books, and now, long past midnight, they were studying the section of the Cabbalah—Why has the soul come down from its high place to the lowness of this world? It is a descent only for the purpose of being able to rise.

They sat there, swaying over the Sacred Books. In the House of Prayer all was silent. It seemed as if over it, in the silent spaces, hung the question—Why? A profound matter—suddenly said the oldest of the three, breaking the deathlike silence. The other

two started as ■ out of a heavy sleep. Even so, they replied softly, a profound, a very profound matter, full of mysteries and deep secrets. And as they spoke thus, the youngest of them said : I have heard that in Liadi, where the Holy Rabbi lives, it is beyond all comprehension. They say that when he ■ studying the Zohar, ■ is something to marvel at. The whole host of heaven, paradise and the saints, the angels and the souls assemble to listen to his words.

I have been told by Hassidim, men of truth, the second of the scholars said, that when the Rabbi of Liadi studies the Zohar " Why "—this same section of the Zohar which we are studying now, he sings so sweetly and with so much yearning, that the soul struggles to leave the sinful body and to merge in the endless. They say that the melody to which he chants the Zohar " Why " is the song of the angels. It is the song with which they accompany the soul when it is hewed away from under the Mercy Seat of the Most High, the place which is the treasure house of the souls, from which they are sent down to this earth. They comfort the soul which is descending from the high worlds to the depths of this world, and it is to the strains of this song of the angels that the soul descends, with the strong will to rise. Here in this sinful world it seeks salvation. And the souls which do not find their salvation or have forgotten their aim because the things of earth have captured them, if they come to the Rabbi of Liadi, and they hear him chant the Zohar " Why," it awakens their memory which has fallen asleep, and they recall the song of the angels, they are caught up in a mighty flame, and they find the way to salvation—to rise.

Here the oldest of them broke in. You have heard it from others, he said, but I have experienced it myself. It happened in this way : It was when I was wandering about the earth, experiencing in myself the anguish of the exile, that I chanced to pass through Liadi. I wanted to hear the Rabbi studying the Zohar, for on the road I had been told about it, that its sanctity was beyond measure. When I visited the Rabbi, I sought an opportunity to penetrate into his private chamber, to conceal myself there and to overhear him studying. I found my opportunity on the Sabbath. After the service, the congregation went to wish him good Sabbath. I, too, went in to wish him good Sabbath, and so I managed to secrete myself in his room. No one

noticed me, and I hid under the bed. How long I lay there, I do not remember. Suddenly, a great light blazed before my eyes. I was overcome with fear and trembling and I wanted to shout. But that I reflected would spoil everything. I would be ejected from the room, and I would not hear anything. So I restrained myself and hardened my soul to listen. That was when he began. As soon as he started chanting the holy words, I felt that my soul would fly out of my body. He was studying this same portion—"Why" And he sang. His singing was so sweet that I lost myself. I felt that in one more moment I should dissolve. I cried out.

When I awoke, I was lying on the Rabbi's bed. The Rabbi stood beside me, and was saying something softly to himself. At first, I did not remember what had happened. I did not know how I had come to be there on the bed. When I gradually recalled what had occurred, I was seized with fear, and I began to sob. The Rabbi understood, and with a loving smile comforted me. I remember that melody still. And whenever I chant it, I am filled with yearning for the Lord, blessed be He.

If you wish, he went on, I shall teach you the melody. And he began to sing. A holy trembling passed through them. The chant intoxicated them, it drew them. They were steeped in it, every fibre of them. They surrendered themselves to the melody with every particle of their being. They felt that it was revealing to them all mysteries, new worlds. The difficult Zohar, which had been so hard to understand, was clear to them. All its mysteries and riddles were solved, and it stood out in all its splendour. They saw the radiance of God. They were filled with sacred fire. All that was earthly fell away from them. They were caught up in a holy ecstasy, and they started to dance. They danced and sang, and they did not see what was around them. The earth receded from under their feet. They soared into the heavens. Their bodies were left behind.

Lost in their sacred task, they did not hear or see the door open and an unknown enter. His eyes blazed, and a glad smile lighted up his face. Aye, he almost shouted, now is the time for the Messiah to come.

He was one of those wandering saints, who go about seeking the way for the Messiah to come. Watching this holy dance of worship, he realised that this was the moment for the Messiah to

come. With a broken heart, he stood there and prayed to God : Lord of the Universe, Ruler of all Worlds, look and see. Is it not time for the salvation ? Help me to bring it ! He strode up and down, clapping his hands, shouting : Louder, louder ! We shall prevail, the Messiah must come ! And he joined the dancers in their ring.

Satan and Lillith were stricken with fear. The pillars of their black kingdom shook. The Messiah was coming, and evil would be overthrown. There would be an end to darkness. The great, long-awaited day was coming.

Suddenly, the door was flung open. A group of women and children, shouting and wailing, rushed in. Lord God, the women cried, a young mother who has little children is dying. Save her !

Seeing the old men dancing, the women ran up to them, crying : Holy men, pray for her ! The dancers did not hear. Their dance grew more frenzied, they chanted more loudly their song—“ Why ? ” And the chant rose higher, higher.

The door of the Rabbi's room opened. The Rabbi came in. He looked at the dancers and was silent. Then he cried : Stop singing ! Stop dancing ! But his cry, too, was lost. The singing and the dancing rose higher. It was rising to meet the Messiah. He was on his way, coming nearer.

“ He is close ! ” the unknown shouted. And the Rabbi's heart trembled, he was filled with the joy of the coming of the Messiah. Then, a cry came to his ears. “ Holy Rabbi, a mother who has little children, is dying. Save her ! ” The Rabbi's heart grew numb, tears stood in his eyes. “ Stop dancing ! I forbid it ! ” he shouted. His words were like thunder. The ring broke. The dancers fell apart.

“ Go home,” the Rabbi said to the women, “ she has been delivered of a son.”

“ Because of a life, the Messiah has been stopped in his coming,” the unknown muttered, and vanished.



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## SINAI

By DAVID FRISHMAN

*Translated by I. M. LASK*

David Frishman, born 1865 in Zgierz, Poland, died, 1922. Brought up in Lodz, where his parents were textile manufacturers. Cousin of the famous painter Samuel Hirshenberg, and thus related to the sculptor, Henry Glicenstein. The greatest Hebrew literary critic. A master of polished Hebrew style. Wrote a great deal also in Yiddish. His poems rank high in Hebrew poetry, and his Hebrew translations of Anatole France, Wilde, Byron, Tagore, Nietzsche, Pushkin, Grimm, Andersen, are regarded as supreme examples of translation into Hebrew. He is above all a master of the feuilleton, writing with elegant sarcasm. The first collection of his works appeared in 1914, for his fiftieth birthday. Complete collections of his works, Hebrew and Yiddish, appeared in 1927.

### I

EVERY man and woman in the villages of the Goshen district knew them ; Tahpanes, tall and ready of hand with his rough voice and his ever-loud speech, and Moses of the long curls and pale face, who was all so fragile and had the eyes of a dreamer. Both were of the offspring of the Hebrews who had settled in Egypt ; but in those days the fixed bounds between tribe and tribe had not yet been established. Moses had already been in Moph twice and once even at No-Amon when the sorcerers forgathered, and had ascended the pulpit and uttered a threne and had spoken of high matters and been for a wonder ; and Tahpanes was likewise a watchword already by reason of his powerful hands and great strength, for thrice at the season of the festival of the rising of the Nile had he been in Zoan and become the victor among the wrestlers.

The two shepherds, always good companions, used to lead their flocks together among the hills to the wilderness, and would go as far as Sinai and Horeb and even the Mount of Myrrh. And these journeys both loved ; one in order to breathe the mountain

air that strengthens sinews and muscles, the other in order to dream his dreams whenever he sat alone under the blue of the dome of Heaven.

! Once they were herding together in the wilderness.

"Hark you," Tahpanes suddenly approached and called, "we must rise now and seek the straying goat until we find it. Rise and aid me."

"The goat?" asked Moses, rousing from his dreams. "Of what goat do you speak?"

"The black goat of *Rameses the baker*. It has vanished since the morning. I and my dogs have sought through all the valley as far as Sinai, but I fear me I have missed the right track. And now ■ will be evening in a little and the wolves will fall on the goat. Therefore we need to make haste and seek it on the slopes of the mountain."

Moses languidly rose and slowly followed his friend. They left the flocks with the boys and the dogs, taking with them only the big sheepdog, and went up the mountain.

They sought for about an hour but in vain. Then Tahpanes said, "Let us separate. I shall ascend here and beyond, and do you turn towards the myrrh thickets near the bush; and take the dog for I do not need it."

Moses took a few paces towards the bush and then sat down. The dog waited a while for him, nosing now here now there and sniffing without let or hindrance, then running back impatient every few moments to its master to see whether he was following. But when it saw him seated motionless, it leapt and barked out very loud and hastened up the mountainside in great leaps to overtake Tahpanes.

Meanwhile Tahpanes ascended the mountain and searched behind every boulder and within every thicket; a few hours passed in search and then he returned to find his friend still sitting where he had left him.

"What is this? Did you allow me to seek while you took your ease here and slept?"

"I never slept," Moses made answer.

Tahpanes said nothing but hastened into the midst of the bush and vanished. In a while his dog scented the black goat of *Rameses the baker*, and Tahpanes set her on his shoulder and returned.

He found his friend still seated on the stone at which he had left him.

"Come, here ■ the goat !"

But Moses never answered, for this time he really was asleep. So Tahpanes roused him.

"See I have found the goat ! Now rise and let us go ; in a little it will be light."

Silent and wordless they descended to the valley. Moses' face was very pale and his knees shook ; and Tahpanes, the strong lad who had never known weariness, aided him.

And as they came to the flocks the morning star arose.

## II

In Zoan of Egypt they celebrated the festival of the Nile. This festival did not compare in splendour to that of Isis and Osiris at Moph or that of Apis the bull at No-Ammon. Only the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside, the toilers, the builders of the store-cities and the shepherds, came hither to see the dances and the games when the jumpers and the runners and the wrestlers strove one against the other ; and sometimes men with knowledge would come from afar, and if they found a one to their liking among the victors, they would persuade him to go to the great cities and show his strength and skill before the princes and the mighty of the land.

Fourteen lads stepped naked into the field. The trumpeters blew their blasts, the overseers gave the sign and the contests began. The jumper must be tested thrice, and should he not leap beyond the bound appointed he must leave the field. Pithom was among those who leapt and succeeded, while Tahpanes succeeded at the first trial and was wondered at for he needed no further a tempt ; but Puti fell to the ground, twisting his foot. Then the trumpeters blew their blasts, the officials gave the sign and the races began. Only seven lads stepped into the field but the others might take no part. On was first among the runners and would have reached the post in a moment ; Pithom was behind him followed by Tahpanes ; but the friends and supporters of Tahpanes, who prided themselves on him, called and gave him heart, and at the last moment he reached the post before the others. Then the trumpeters blew their blasts, the priests gave the sign

and the wrestlers took the field ; only two came forward, for none were left to take part saving On and Tahpanes. The overseers rubbed their flesh with woollen kerchiefs and poured oil upon them and anointed them and then they began. On seized Tahpanes by the thighs, gripped him and tried to throw him, but Tahpanes butted at him with his stone-hard brow till he forced him back ; then he seized his left hand and squeezed the fingers in his palm until On cried for the hurt ; then he threw him. And the contest was renewed a second and a third time, with Tahpanes the victor again and again.

The villagers who were acquainted with On stamped their feet and hissed and whistled for anger. But the friends of Tahpanes shouted and roared and encouraged him, and afterwards they bore him on their hands to the place where the officials sit. And the first priest gave him the papyrus inscribed with hieroglyphics, the second priest sprinkled him with Nile water while the third, the very High Priest, bound the reed to his head with his own hand.

And a multitude gathered round Tahpanes, pressing from far and near all about him, while the experienced ones who had come from afar felt the muscles of his arms and the thews of his thighs.

"Had you run a whit better you might have hoped to stand before Apis next year among the men of might who lead him at the festival in No-Amon," said the one. But the other approached him, bent the knee, bowed to earth and felt the corded flesh and the joints of his legs.

"Come with me," said he to him, "I shall instruct you, and be certain that if you learn from me for six months you will assuredly receive the wreath fashioned of the hair of the tail of Apis in No-Amon."

The eyes of Tahpanes grew bright.

"Go with him !" cried all his friends and fellow countrymen, their eyes brightening as well.

### III

The feast came next. Tahpanes sprawled on the dais beside the priests, the noble officials and the leaders of the people ; beside him stood the man who would be his instructor, never leaving him even for a moment ; near them were the men and the villagers who celebrated the festival.

Then came Moses, his pipe in his hand. Slowly, slowly did he approach, as though he were dreaming, till he stood before the priests. And the instant Tahpanes noticed his presence he leapt to his feet and made a place for him, setting his strong arm about him and pressing him to his side.

"Would you sing?" he asked. "Come up here." And he guided him on to the dais with his own hand.

"Be still, Moses would sing the praises of Tahpanes, would recount his valour!" cried the townsmen who knew Tahpanes and esteemed him.

And Moses began, but did not sing the praises of the victor Tahpanes; nor did he laud his valour.

He sang of that evening, when a hush had been poured upon all things and he and his flock had been in the field by Mount Sinai. And he had told his flock and his herd and found that one was lost. And he had gone forth to seek it and had climbed into the mazy ways of the Mount. Night came and stormwinds passed over the surface of the earth, lightnings leapt and flashed amid the rocks and boulders while thunders rolled and echoed among the many crags; yet he had not stood still but had climbed and climbed aloft. Gaping crevasses he had leapt across and clambered up the steeps.

And the tempest turned to silence while he laboriously passed through the oak wood; and of a sudden there was a wondrous sight before him. A mighty, fearsome tongue of flame leapt from the briar, and the briar flamed in fire, flamed and flamed yet was not consumed. And an angel of God soared aloft in the flame while a voice cried "Moses! Moses!" And he had been afeared to draw near. Then he had doffed him his shoon and had taken two or three paces forward yet could go no further, and the voice had spoken and he had hearkened, hiding him his face and fearing to look.

Then had come a beating of wings such as had never yet been, such as had never yet been heard of ear.

And the Glory of God appeared while he hid him his face in his two hands yet nevertheless he could perceive it.

And God had spoken and had spoken unto him: "Go return unto Egypt and fashion me a people. And dost thou know how a people shall be fashioned?"

"The slave and the unfortunate shalt thou summon unto thee,

all those who do moan for toil and for overmuch labour and who are afflict of the oppressor and the official and who possess nought saving it be a heart wherein is a little suffering ; and thou shalt speak unto them, and shalt lead them forth from the house of bondage and shalt redeem them and shalt give them statutes and laws ; and thou shalt make them for a people.

" For a man may fashion him Pithom and Rameses, and a man may fashion giants in the skies, and pyramids and obelisks, and a man may set sphinxes to be for ever and aye. Yet are all these of nought, and all these works are of no account to that great creating when a man builds a people. And thou shalt create me a people !

" Go thou to Egypt and come unto the afflict and the unfortunate, to all that sigh and are oppressed and say unto them that they are slaves ; and they shall not understand. And say unto them that they are unfortunate, and they shall not know it. And that their suffering is great and great their pains and dread their affliction ; and they shall not believe. And thou shalt force their eyes open with a strong hand for all their affliction and for all their suffering ; and thou shalt redeem them.

" And a many people shall be drawn after thee from the midst of thy brethren, whom thou hast not known and who know thee not as yet ; and from amidst all the people around about with whom it fares ill and bitter ; and thou shalt be the father of a great multitude and the head of its tribes ; and of the worms thou shalt fashion Man ; and of Man—a nation ; and of the dust and sands—a land.

" And Pithom and Rameses shall vanish and the pyramids shall fall and the obelisks shall drop asunder and sphinxes shall no more be ; but this people shall stand firm. For the people of the unfortunates shall not vanish from the face of the earth as long as the heavens arch over the earth."

And there was a beating of wings such as never yet has been.

And the briar flamed and burned while I covered my face with both hands and saw.

#### IV

And Moses was silent, and all those who hearkened round about were also still.

Then Tahpanes rose.

" He speaks falsehood ! " cried he. " Every word that leaves

his lips is false ! All he says he has invented ! I myself was with him that night when we sought the lost goat ! 'Twas the black goat of Rameses the baker ! I and he, we went up to the mountains together. But there were no stormwinds, for it was a clear bright night. Where did he see the gaping deeps of which he spoke ? What does he tell of thunders rolling and rumbling amid the crags ? What has he to do with the flaming briar and the angel of God and God ? By the life of Pharaoh none of all this did happen ! I went up to the rocks alone and bade him go with the dog into the bushes near the myrrh ; but he sat him down on a stone and fell asleep. All night long I sought till I found the lost goat, and when I returned I found him still sitting sleeping on the stone. Out upon him for his falsehoods ! ”

The men standing round were raging and shouting. Moses still stood unmoving, resting his dream-laden eyes on the famous men, like one who neither knew nor understood why they were all storming and shouting. He was perplexed and his eyes wandered searching round till they fell on the old priest.

“ Let him be ! ” cried Aaron. “ I shall be his shield ! ”

But the mob stormed and raised its fists.

“ Why a shield for him ! Put him to death, put the liar to death ! ”

Then the priest drew near to Moses, set his left hand on his shoulder and stretched out his right arm.

“ Give him to us ! ” cried Tahpanes. “ He is a liar ! ”

“ A liar ?—Why, he but sings his song ! ”

And the song became truth.

Ask the boy going to school with his book under his arm.

Ask him, “ What do you know of Sinai ? ”

He will answer you, “ On Mount Sinai God revealed himself to Moses Lord of the prophets who saw God face to face as no man other has seen Him and lived. And the briar flamed in the fire but was not consumed ; and God came down to him and spoke and gave him courage to go to Egypt and bring the Children of Israel out of the house of bondage and give them the land of their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And when Pharaoh hardened his heart——”

I am certain that for a full hour he will tell you of that Mountain Sinai unto which God descended in the fire and where he gave Torah and judgment to Israel, giving them the land he had sworn to their fathers.

Often enough he will be able to recite you, word for word, all that God spake by Moses' mouth on Mount Sinai.

Even now, thousands of years afterwards.

Is there any place upon Earth more praiseworthy than Sinai ?

Moses was the name of the seer and singer ; and those who heard him first did call him liar.

## VI

Did call him ; but the word of the singer prevailed over the strength of the wrestler.

The singer won the victory. Tahpanes was the first to taste thereof for he was cast from a peak and his bones were scattered far and wide because he had " cursed God." He was slain a few days after Moses spoke. They slew defiling truth so that the seer's dream might live.

Which is Israel—Israel.

## VII

The assembly was held by night.

" Let the dream be a truth ! Let Sinai be the place whence Torah shall spread to all peoples, and to which all the nations of Earth shall turn. Myriads upon myriads upon myriads of men shall bow them down to it ! " So spoke the High Priest.

" I am the first to profess openly before all my belief, namely, that every word of the Hebrew shepherd is full truth ! "

" And I believe as you do," said Eleazar the priest.

" And I," said Phineas.

" And I, and I, and I ! " came from every side.

And the whole countryside believed, seeing signs and wonders with their own eyes day by day.

Yet there still remained one, apart from Tahpanes who had been slain for defying God, whom they feared lest he might be seized by a new spirit of a sudden and speak otherwise ; Moses himself.

And he too died.

And no man knoweth his burying place unto this day.

## KING DAVID'S CAVE

By CH. N. BIALIK

*Translated by I. M. LASK*

Chaim Nachman Bialik, born, 1873, in a village in the province of Volhynia, Ukraine, where his parents had a small shop. Afterwards they moved to the big town of Jitomir. The most important Hebrew poet of modern times. Has also written a great deal in Yiddish and has himself translated many of his Hebrew poems into Yiddish. His father died when he was seven, and his early years were spent in poverty and hardship. His grandfather, a fanatically orthodox Jew, who brought him up, kept him away from children of his own age, so that he had no playmates. He was kept hard ■ his studies and Caballist Hassidic literature stirred his poetic fancy. He afterwards studied at the famous Yeshibah at Voloszin. He later settled in Odessa, learnt Russian, dealt in timber for a time, and afterwards gave private lessons and wrote in his spare time. He then started a printing press and founded the Moriah Hebrew Publishing House, which he transferred to Palestine when he went there in 1923. Suffered a great deal at the hands of the Bolsheviks. Is at the head of the Palestine Committee for Protesting against Jewish Persecution in Russia. Has rendered into wonderful Yiddish translation a number of poems by the great medieval Hebrew poet, Judah Halevi. Translated "Don Quixote" into Hebrew. Peretz translated some of Bialik's works into Yiddish. Bialik's sixtieth birthday was celebrated in January, 1933, as a national festival in Palestine Jewry.

### I

Two greathearted God-fearing youths lived in the same town; true and faithful friends were they one to the other, and both were wretchedly poor, possessing nothing save bodies lean with overmuch fasting, garments worn with age and eyes grown full dim with poring over mystic scrolls and with reckonings and computations of the end of days. They would always sit together in a tiny attic, four ells upon four, one in his corner meditating and the other over his books, aspiring to the end of days and awaiting salvation.

One Sabbath night, being the seventh day in the waxing of the moon, the youths lay sleeping upon the floor of their attic as they were wont, one curled in his corner and the other with his sorry bundle rolled beneath his head, the blemished moon keeping ward over them and strewing her sorrowful light among the shadows of the room. And that night both of them dreamed one dream.

They stood in the field hallowing the moon at its full. And turning to greet one another with the threefold blessing of peace, as is the custom, they saw yet a third, an old man, whom they did not know nor whence he had come thither, standing hallowing by them, his closed eyes lifted to heaven, his beard flowing down like silver across his breast and a golden key depending from a chain below his loins. Most astonished were they, but did not suffer a break in their praying ; instead their hearts warmed of a sudden when the old man appeared, their prayers scorched their lips as might a flaming torch, they leapt aloft toward the moon and ■ their bones gave praise and at length the prayer gathered, grew to a flame, and there in the field all three of them roared like lions, " David King of Israel lives indeed ! David King of Israel lives indeed ! David King of Israel lives indeed ! "

They roared once, twice and again, while a wondrous thing happened : from roar to roar the blemished moon grew full and clear till all sign or token of stain and blemish had vanished. And this clear perfect moon stood in the midst of the heavens with its light strong and bright as the shining of the sun ; and all the field round about was lit up from end to end. Then the old man suddenly turned to them, saying :

" Let your Sabbaths be peace and your months for a blessing, ye sons of the Living God ! Know that I keep ward over King David's Cave. Month by month, when the New Moon is hallowed and from the lips of thousands upon myriads of Israel ascends the cry that David King of Israel lives indeed, King David rouses from his slumber in the cave, raises his head a bit and silently stretches out his hands towards the cruse beside him as though he were waiting. For is there none to pour water on the hands of his king and thereby free him of the shackles of his slumber so that he may go forth to bring his people the Redemption ? But the hands of the king return empty time and again. Never a one of the Sons of Exile comes to pour water upon the hands of his king when he stirs. The moments of good will and

mercy pass with nought to show, and the head of the king sinks slowly back on the pillow.

"Now if indeed your souls do fully and of a verity long for the Redemption, delay not even for one moment, go scour the earth and after thirty days, on the seventh day of the coming moon, you will find the cave in which King David slumbers ; take your way within and do whatsoever God instructs you by His messengers on the way. But beware of all that is impure and unclean when you go forth and when you come thither ; turn no back on any adversary, nor let your heart be turned aside by reason of any desire soever. See I have admonished you ; depart in peace !"

As he ended the moon grew faint of a sudden with all its blemishes and stains. The old man had vanished.

## II

The youths arose at the end of the First Watch to bewail the Exile of the Shechina and to weep for the destruction of the House of God as they were wont ; and they remembered their dreams and recounted them one to the other, finding them one and the same to their astonishment. So they took the matter to heart and said, "This night God must have sent us a true thought by His angel. Let us arise and set to."

Nor did they delay, but girded their loins, took their staffs, set their knapsacks on their backs and forsook their town in order to scour the earth in search of the Cave of King David as the old man had counselled in the dream. And they went their way day and night and night and day taking every road that offered and making their search along every path and track, and everywhere ; but did not find that which they sought. And they inquired of the wayfarers, "Tell us, wayfarers, perchance you know where the cave of King David is hid ?"

But none of the wayfarers could tell them ought ; nobody knew where it might be. And the youths grieved and grew weary by cause of the toil of the way.

At dusk one day they approached a ruin in the field to rest a bit. They loosed their girdles, laid down their staffs and sat down by a leaning wall to get their breaths. Suddenly they heard a still small voice, moaning and downcast, coming from the ruin. They entered and found a grieving dove there with ruffled

feathers, sitting alone in a corner and moaning quietly. Their hearts went out to her moaning and they asked her :

“ What ails you, dove, to be dejected so ? And why do you moan ? ”

And the dove flapped her wings and sighed bitterly :

O berue the day, O berue the day,  
Babes, where are you, say ?  
Chicks, where are you, say ?  
Reft by bird of prey  
Swooping in the fray  
And my nest is desolate and I in disarray.  
O berue the day, O berue the day.

The youths wept their pity for the lonely bereft dove. When they wiped their tears away they said :

“ In sooth there is no grief like yours, poor turtledove. Yet know that the day of rewards and comfortings is near. We be two comrades who see how Messiah delays his coming and are gone forth to seek King David's cave. Perchance you know how it may be reached ? ”

The dove roused itself, stirred, clapped its wings and replied :

This I know, this I know,  
Seventy leagues and seven go  
Till within the field a height  
Crested by a palm you sight,  
Ask of it and it will say  
What must be your proper way.  
Go, go forth without delay  
—Think of the dove when you pray.

### III

The youths rose, rubbed the sleep from their lids, girded their loins and went their way. Ere they were gone far a beast, not over large but exceeding mockable in its appearance, suddenly appeared before them on the path and began to cut all manner of capers, standing erect on two legs and dancing backward, drumming on its belly, switching its tail, twitching its muzzle, poking out its tongue, turning somersaults on the ground and many another such. And the youths knew that this was the ounce come against them. For the ounce is wont to romp before wayfarers till a fit

of laughter seizes them and they lose their wits the while and pursue it, holding their sides for laughter, until they reach the entrance to its lair. There it suddenly leaps and digs its teeth and claws into them, sucking their marrow and their blood while they writhe helpless with laughter. But the youths knew the spell by which to destroy its power and turned a fig and spat thrice toward it and went on in peace without laughing. And the beast, seeing that its stratagem had failed this time, fled away in shame on its tiny feet ; and the youths took it for a sign God prospered their way, and their spirits grew strong and of a good courage.

And day and night and night and day they went their way, taking every road that offered and making their search along every path and track till after many days they came to a lone knoll in the field with a single palmtree at its crest as the dove had said. They hasted to the palm in order to rest in its shade and taste its fruit to restore their souls. But when they drew near they found its fronds hanging broken, its shade mean and strait, a fallen abandoned nest at its foot and its entire seeming bare and stripped as a tree after leaf-fall. And they grieved exceedingly and said to the palm :

" What has befallen you, O palm, that you mourn so ? And why are your adornments vanished ? "

And the palm listlessly waved its broken fronds and answered bitterly :

Woe and bitter rue, woe and bitter rue,  
Palmfronds, where are you ?  
Branches, where are you ?  
Where my strength and where my might,  
My goodly fruit and lofty height ?  
All my power the storm did steal,  
Reft my crown, destroyed my weal,  
And the earth my loss doth view,  
For my broken fronds do brush it every day anew.  
Woe and bitter rue, woe and bitter rue.

The youths wept upon hearing the sorrows of the palm, sitting mourning on the ground with downcast heads. Then they rose from the dust and said :

" In sooth yours was a bitter blow, bruised and misfortunate palm ; yet know that the day of healing and aid is near. We be two comrades who have seen how Messiah delays and the

Deliverance is far away, and we are come hither to seek King David's Cave. Perchance you know how we may reach it ? ”

The palm stirred, a quivering whisper of joy passed through its broken fronds, and it clapped its long dry leaves and answered :

This ■ known, is known to me,  
Beyond seven leagues times seventy  
A river in the valley you shall see,  
Whose waters tumble on their way  
And weep in silence day by day.  
Ask of it and it will tell  
And clamour to you and bubble and swell. . . .  
Haste and stay not ; remember the palm as well.

#### IV

So the youths rose and betook themselves further. As they reached the wood nearby a great cur and a bitch, black and very furious to see, came out of the thicket, their brows stamped with leprosy and both baying with never a sound to be heard. They stood, the cur here and the bitch there, waiting on either side of the path, their tails between their legs, their tongues slavering, their running lips dribbling and a cruel purpose in their red eyes. Then the youths knew that these were Samael and Lilith come in the likeness of dogs to hold them back ; and they were much afearcd and their hearts stood still, for the silent baying of the dogs gripped their bones like the dread frost. But rousing afresh, they uttered the spell they knew and struck their staffs thrice upon the ground. And the dogs could not withstand the spell but fled in terror and dismay, fleeing and baying noiselessly, while the youths turned a fig and spat thrice after them.

Then their strength returned and they went on without rest day and night and night and day till they reached a fast flowing river in a valley, and sat them beside it to rest and be refreshed. Scarce were they seated ere the flow of the waters reached their ears as a quiet ceaseless weeping. And the youths grieved and sadly questioned the river, “ What ails you, river, that you weep so ? And wherefore do your waters moan in such a wise ? ”

And the ripples in the river rolled and answered :

Wealce, wealce,  
What can I do but groan ?  
How shall I not make moan

Blood my fount and tears my source—  
When God hath muddied me ?  
No glad waves dance along my course  
With joyful noise or happy voice,  
Nor dream my deeps of sparkling glee.  
My fish are dead, my surface lead,  
Welalee, O welalee.

The lads moaned and their tears flowed with the waters of the river. And when they were wearied for weeping they wiped away their tears and said :

" In sooth, river, your grief is deep ! Yet know that the day of comforting and rest draws nigh. We be two friends from the same city, and having seen how the Redeemer delays his coming we took oath before God to hasten his day ; and now we go seeking the cave of David the King. Mayhap you know or have heard of the way whereby it can be reached ? "

The surface of the river grew bright, a shudder of joy passed over it, its ripples frolicked and it answered :

Hearken, hearken, list to me.  
In twenty leagues times seventy,  
More maybe or less maybe,  
You will come in many days  
To shattered stones that mark the place  
Of the Holy City's grave.  
Turn left, turn right, and then go straight  
To God's mount till you see a cave  
With an ancient standing at its gate.  
Radiance gleaming in his face—  
Haste, O haste ; remember the river in the hour of grace.

# V

So the youths took heart and rose to go their way. They were still among the neighbouring rocks when a huge gross serpent suddenly darted from its ambush, its green eyes glinting with fury, a sort of tiny gold crown upon its head, a gold ridge along the back behind its head, its mouth open and oozing, and crawling, seething with speed toward them, stretched itself out like a beam of wood across their path, its head, its stretched mouth and forked tongue pointing towards them. And they knew that this was the Olden Serpent come to block their way, and a great trembling

seized them. Nevertheless they speedily took heart, whispered the spell they knew, scraped earth from under the soles of their feet, scraping and scattering toward the serpent three full times. It could not withstand the charm but fled in fear and terror, sliding along through the dust seething and quivering all down its length, while the youths turned a fig and spat thrice after it ere it vanished.

Then their strength returned and they took their way further, proceeding without stay or rest day and night, night and day, till their legs grew swollen and puffy and their garments and shoes fell to pieces upon them. They had no strength to go further and were all but despairing, when they raised their eyes and perceived the Mount of God afar, and the likeness of ruins upon them. And they renewed their strength and went onward without track or way among shattered stones ; and they turned right and turned left and then went straight on as the river had spoken ; and when they drew near the mountain they stood still. Still gazing around, they beheld an aged man and a hairy coming round the flank of the mountain toward them, garbed in a mantle, a girdle of leather about his loins, and a gold key hanging below his waist.

They recognised him, for this was the aged man they had seen in their dream ; and their hearts within them were exceedingly glad and they hastened toward him and prostrated them before him, saying :

" Peace be unto you, exalted ancient ! "

And the aged man, his face bright, replied :

" Peace, peace be unto you, ye sons of the living God ! "

And he signed that they should follow.

They followed him in silence, and he went to an iron door concealed in the flanks of the mountain and beat loud upon it crying thrice :

" Open gates ! "

The door opened. Then he said :

" Go secure, straight on. You will come to a squared stone. Roll it aside and you will enter a room where King David lies resting on his bed, a cruse beside him in which are the waters of Salvation which Adam drew from the rivers of Eden so that Salvation might spring from them in the latter days. And when the king stretches his hands out to you, hasten to pour the waters upon them. Then will the king awake from his slumber and go forth as a lion from his den to bring the Redemption to his people

and gather their dispersed back to Jerusalem from the four corners of the Earth."

And they stood in amaze at his word ; and as they stood, flames of fire blazed between them and they beheld a chariot of fire and horses of fire and the aged man went up to heaven in a tempest before their eyes.

Then they knew that they had seen the prophet of Exile, Elijah himself, and their hearts stood still and they fell to the ground. But they took heart and hastened into the cave as the aged one had spoken. They penetrated the gloom till they found a stone jutting out of a wall ; and they moved the stone and there was a room before them, vaulted in gold and a golden couch within it on which rested King David in all his hoary majesty like a sleeping lion. The presence of God made his visage bright, at his head stood the cruse of water and the lance, a wax candle burned at his feet, a gold harp hung on the wall, and the jewelled crown and sceptre lay before him on the golden table beside the open Book of Psalms. They stood astounded to view—and the king stretched his hands out toward them. . . .

But they were confused by the wealth of gold and treasures and precious things found in the chamber ; and at that moment their eyes were held by a great emerald shining in the king's crown which seemed as the full moon of their dream ; and they stood as though dreaming and wonderstruck, their soles cleaving to the ground ; and ere they might move the king withdrew his hands, sighing quietly and deep, and his head slipped back wearily on the bed.

Then the youths roused from their amaze and remembered the cruse of water ; but to no avail. Their time was gone and nought could help. . . . And there was a sudden black dread round about. The sight vanished, the vision was dissolved as though it had never been.

And a wind arose from hidden places and tossed them into the field far far away from the cave. And with the return of their senses they found themselves sitting by the ruin whither they had come to refresh themselves on starting out on their way ; and out of the ruin came the subdued moaning of the mourning dove.

## SHAATNEZ

By SAUL TCHERNICHOVSKY

*Translated by I. M. LASK*

(*Shaatznez* : a mixture of wool and linen the wearing of which ■ forbidden in the Pentateuch. This prohibition ■ still observed by Orthodox Jews.)

Saul Tchernichovsky, born 1875, in the Crimea. The second poet of Modern Hebrew. He was brought up outside the Jewish Pale and had a secular as well as a Jewish education. Critics love ■ call him a Hellenist and pagan on the strength of some boyish and undergraduate flourishes—rather fine in their way nevertheless. Sometimes he obliges the critics and uses their formula ; but his outstanding characteristic is his love of the sun and of all that lives in the sun. This, however, is an attitude at least as much Hassidic as Hellenic and an appraisal in the English "Davar" once described Tchernichovsky as a Hassid drunk with the sun.

His best poetic work is found in his "Idylls and Ballads," and he ■ still fruitful. He has published a wide range of translations, ranging from Homer, Plato, Anacreon and Theocritus to the Gilgamesh and Kalevala epics. His prose is very racy and he inclines to the sketch. "Shaatznez" has been specially translated at his request.

Tchernichovsky is a doctor of medicine, and holds the position of director of the Hadassah Hospital in Haifa. He has also been appointed to complete the Hebrew Dictionary of Medicine and Natural Science, started by the late Dr. Mazia, and interrupted by his death in 1930.

Tchernichovsky's complete works in ten volumes were published in 1932.

WELL, we're living in a period of encyclopedias and there are people about who believe that encyclopedias can tell you everything. But me's just the opposite. I'm certain even the best encyclopedia in the world can't tell you much. And whose fault ■ it ? The publishers', of course. They really do honestly believe that it's scholars and experts, German professors or at least Doctors, educated people as you might say, who have to fill up their fat volumes.

Me, I'm not so sure. Seems to me if they gave the job to the novelists and detective-story writers we'd have something like.

Here's an instance and it'll show you what I'm driving at.

Say you want to know something about a town called Ruzhan. You heave down the right volume of the encyclopedia from its shelf, end of letter R, search till you find Ruz on the top left-hand corner of page so and so, and look down the columns till you find your subject RUZHAN staring you in the face in big fat letters. And what d'you find after all your sweat and trouble? This :

RUZHAN. Grodno Government, Slonim district. Jimmy o' Goblin, Gob's my uncle, Hot Dogs ■ Bubble & Squeak and so on and so forth till at last you read. . . . According to the Census of 1847 the town contained 1,556 Jews. It has a Talmud Torah (1910).

Now shove that back on its shelf and reach down volume PR and run through the whole rigmarole over again till you find—here we are—PRUZHAN. And what's it got to tell you this time?

PRUZHAN. Grodno Government, Grodno District. John o' Groats to Lands End & Uncle Tom Cobley and old Bill Bailey till you come to . . . According to the Census of 1847 the town contained 2,580 Jews. It has a Talmud Torah (1910).

So now shove that back as well and ask yourself what's the difference between Ruzhan and Pruzhan according to the Encyclopedia.

There ain't none.

And what's Ruzhan?

Twenty lines in the middle of a page, that's all.

But what is Ruzhan like really?

Now you're asking. And since you want to know I'll tell you a story of something that happened there just round about the time o' that Census, maybe ten years earlier maybe ten years later. And that'll tell you what Ruzhan is.

To start off with, my father Olav Hasholem was born in Ruzhan. It's no odds what he was or what he did. What's important is that he was a real God-fearing Jew who kept the commandments. And he used to have business in Riga—that's to say he earned his money in Riga and spent it in Ruzhan. He had a house there, he had a steady seat in the House of Study there, he used to pay for his kids' teaching there, and there he used to have his own and

his family's clothes mended by Reb Shmerel the men's tailor. This Shmerel was then, when we were kids, an old man, and my grandfather and perhaps my great-grandfather as well had used to order their clothes from him. So he had a right to the family's work. He knew the measure of the whole family by heart, and since nobody knew anything about fashions in those days he'd fix every customer in the style that suited him best.

It was sufficient if you handed in the material to him. And if you like, a man didn't even need to take the trouble to go to the shopkeeper and choose his cloth, still less the lining. After all, everything was fixed beforehand; but all the same folk walked into the shop, chose their stuff, argued the price with the shopkeeper, went and had a chat with the tailor and then went and thought things over just so's to enjoy their buying and have the satisfaction that comes to a man who only sells things all his life long when once he has to go and do some shopping himself.

This Reb Shmerel the tailor always used to say, "Just as the Torah is deeper than deep, so is the tailoring deeper than deep."

And really the tailoring has all kinds of tricky bits of its own, hidden seams and folds and corners poked away out of sight. Beside what you can see—the cloth and the lining—there's what you can't see, what they call the extras, which an ordinary week-day Jew can never get the hang of what it's been shoved away out of sight for in there. Every now and then a thick hair makes its way out, and of course always on the chest near the lapels where everybody can see it, but I've never yet found anybody outside the tailoring to know how it gets there or what it's been up to all this while.

These extras aren't the buyer's business at all. When he's chosen his cloth and his lining the shopkeeper spits something out to his assistant who jumps up and starts sticking strips of some funny stuff into the bundle and tying the lot together. They never ask the customer's advice and don't tell him anything about it.

Well, my father's coat which I'm going to tell you about was also made by Shmerel the tailor.

All said and done a man might have supposed there was only one sort of broadcloth, one sort of lining and one sort of cut for all clothes, and maybe only one tailor and all.

Anyway, early one autumn my father goes off to Riga and as usual takes along his good winter coat with him. First because it was a new coat ; second because the cold weather was mighty near ; and third because winter coats were invented to make people have respect for the wearers and it's a fine sort of magic for raising credit with.

And one fine day my father catches his coat against a nail sticking out of a fence and comes away wi' his coat torn and goes into his hotel raging mad almost and heartbroken for the aggravation. The hotel-keeper and his missus come along, and all the lodgers in the place crowd round and all of them take a share in father's grief and feel as heartbroken as he does, running down the owner of the fence and putting the blame on the authorities for never seeing anything of what they ought to see. And they stand there arguing the toss like members of Parliament or a Pogrom Protest Committee and finally come to the conclusion that there ain't no help for the coat only to hand it over to a tailor that's a real good hand at a repair. And so it was. After each one of them had named the tailor he thought the best, the hotel-keeper sends for a tailor he knows and hands the coat over to him. And early next morning he brings back his work, gets his pay and off he goes.

A week goes by and father begins to forget the whole business. And all of a sudden one bright morning the hotel-keeper's missus comes walking into his room to tell him that the same tailor as mended his coat wants to speak to him.

"What's he want of me?" says father wondering.

"He don't want to say."

"Call him in."

The tailor walks in and for the first time father takes a good look at him. He sees an old man, dried up and narrow-chested, with bulging eyes and a gentle sort of face. A respectable God-fearing sort of person.

"What's your business?"

The tailor asks if he recognises him. He's the tailor who mended the overcoat.

Father says yes, he recognises him.

Then the tailor says he's been making inquiries about my father, where he's from and what kind of man he is, and folk had told him he's a scholar and God-fearing.

"What do you want to go to all that trouble for? D'you want to arrange a match?"

"I don't want to make a match and I'm not a matchmaker. But seeing you're a God-fearing man I've got to let you into something I didn't tell you when I brought you back your job."

"And what is it you didn't let me into?"

Then the tailor says that really it's hard for anyone but a tailor to know this. The lining of the coat he'd had to mend was shaatnez.

Well, father says it's impossible. He himself would never have bought shaatnez and the shopkeeper was an honest man, while the tailor who'd made the overcoat was all you could ask a Jew to be, so how could such a thing be? Shaatnez! Did he realise what he was saying? Something forbidden in definite words in the Torah itself! He'd never heard anything like it in all his days.

Then the tailor answers he harbours no suspicions against decent folks, God forbid, but sometimes it's hard even for an old hand to recognise such things, and when he'd seen what it was he hadn't known what to do and couldn't make up his mind. Because he thought at first maybe my father was one of the people who took such things easy; you know, these youngsters nowadays; well, well, least said soonest mended—and so he said to himself better father should break the Law in error than do ■ on purpose. But he hadn't been able to rest till he'd made enquiries as to the sort of man the owner of the overcoat was and folk had told him he was particular over religious matters. So in that case he was only doing his duty in reporting the matter to him.

All the same father couldn't imagine how it was possible. Shaatnez! Couldn't understand! They didn't do that sort of thing in our place.

The tailor answers he's only doing what he has to do, namely his duty. And if, God forbid, father suspected that he was just out for a job again, he could tell him right away that he didn't want to have the mending of that coat. Father might do as he pleased. As for him, he'd done his duty.

He says good-day and turns and goes out.

The upshot was that father gave his overcoat to be examined and tested for shaatnez. And he gave it to the same tailor because

he saw that he really was a straightforward, honest man. Naturally father didn't even want the smell of shaatnez about him.

And the day ■ gets back to Ruzhan father sends for Shmerel (the long one, because in our town there was another Shmerel who was also a tailor, only he was called the short one) and asks him to take the trouble to come over right away. And in a little while Shmerel comes in and politely greets father, asks how he is, how's business, what the journey's like and so on. Deep down in his heart he felt sure that there was another decent job coming to him. Only father doesn't beat about the bush but goes straight to it and tells him about the shaatnez in the overcoat.

Reb Shmerel jumps up like a snake had bit him. He can't believe his ears.

"Me use shaatnez! Do you want me to swear by my beard and earlocks? Material like this—when did I forget all I learnt about cloth? A man like me isn't going to sin for the sake of material worth a couple of coppers a yard! Only what? All because of some tailor in Riga that don't know his job—how many madmen there are running about the streets! I don't want to hear any more such nonsense!"

Well, father argues and the tailor argues and neither wants to give way.

For the afternoon prayers father goes off to his House of Study. And there, betwixt the afternoon and evening prayers, all his friends and acquaintances gather round him since he's just back from the big city. And who else should be there but all the tailors in the town! Reb Shmerel at their head, the old and venerable tailors behind him, those of second degree behind them and the youngsters, journeymen and apprentices hindmost. They'd all already heard the tale of the shaatnez, but wanted to get it direct from father all over again.

And when they'd heard the yarn from father direct, they turned to one another, shrugged their shoulders, plucked at their beards and stared at each other and say it's impossible, because they all use this stuff and folk have always been using it ever since there was a Ruzhan almost. And now we turn up and start yelling shaatnez! Well, if it's shaatnez, "there's never a house without its own dead," as they say; meaning shaatnez. Because everyone in town uses the same kind of cloth.

Now you know what it's like in a House of Study twixt afternoon and evening prayers ; one fellow recites Psalms, another his daily page of Talmud, a third glances at a book—everybody's got something to do on his own. But that evening all the benches were emptied and all the folk came flocking round father and the tailormen, and all eyes were turned the same way. While they're discussing the business somebody remembers an old story about a shaatnez affair. The old men cough like lords, wipe their watery old eyes wi' red handkerchiefs and tell one another all sorts of tales of long ago. The youngsters go twiddling the buttons on their coats and wait for the word with shining eyes. They've also got something to tell, they have.

Well, 'twas time for prayers and they ■ shut up.

But next day between afternoon and evening prayers again, all the tailors and the householders gather round by the East Wall and father holds forth and the tailors hold forth and everybody in the crowd starts holding forth on his own.

But it don't stop at the twilight hour ; you hear it betwixt customer and customer, between courses at meals, between husband and wife, between kitchenmaid and the cook, in the grocer's and at the butcher's, in the street and at the market place, in the kitchen and the drawing-room. You'd have thought people have nothing to talk about in the world only shaatnez.

And you might have thought there was a blooming civil war round Ruzhan, wi' the tailors and shopkeepers on one side and the householders on the other. The householders would strike up a casual "heard the latest" and would pass on to running down the tailoring in all its branches, finishing up with a flourish how there's no line so lowers the folk in it as the tailoring, as the whole business of the remnants goes to show. And people haven't ever looked down on tailormen as they did then, when the name of tailor became a byword in Ruzhan, them and their wives and their children and anybody who had anything to do with 'em.

And Lord knows how long the business mightn't have gone on if the warden hadn't had a bright idea, a real stroke of genius as you might say. Seeing that there's a place called Lodz where they make cloth, and seeing how one of his relations ■ off to Lodz in a few days and will be back soon, and seeing as in Lodz lives his brother-in-law, the warden's, that is, and has a lot to do

with the merchants and manufacturers, then anyway he'd know who should be tackled about this. So the best thing to do is to send him a sample o' the cloth and let him find out.

Well, they did it and the town quietened down.

A week goes by and it's in the House of Study again between Afternoon and Evening Prayers. And everything's in order, everybody's in his own place about his own affairs. One's reading, t'other's learning, a third's alone and a fourth one in his group, and all of a sudden the door's slammed open like a thunderclap and someone rushes in and never shuts it behind him though it was good and cold outside ; and he dashes in breathless wi' his mouth gaping open and his eyes bulging, gripping his coat lapels, and never stopping to pass the time o' day till he reaches the middle of the big room. There he stands still and at the top of his voice he yells out :

" In Lodz they said it's—shaatnez ! "

Well, if there'd been a thunder-storm in the middle of winter it wouldn't have made them jump more than that voice. The sitters were petrified and the standers were frozen at their books and their places, one with his mouth open, t'other waving his hands in the middle of an argument, and someone else in the middle of scratching his back.

Because if so everybody in Ruzhan must be wearing shaatnez, men and women, gaffer and youngster, rich and poor, scholar and ignorant. You'd find it in suit or costume, lapel and seam, in overcoat and in waistcoat and in breeches ; fur coat and cloak, lining and sleeve, hem and train, pocket and collar, there would be no dodging shaatnez. The whole world was just one heap of shaatnez !

Then when the first fright and the startled quietness were over, there began a tremendous upset and mix up which was like nothing that ever happened in Ruzhan. Everyone wanted to hear over again what report had come, just to make sure.

And then came the second fright. Off come capote and off come coat ! Away with the shaatnez ! Strip ! Off come coat and off come waistcoat ! Frost outside—well, what's the odds ! Let it be cold. But still—all the same—if you'll excuse my mentioning it, the breeches have to come off as well ! Doesn't matter. Let 'em bring whatever they can from home. Dressing-gown, shawl, anything you like so long as ■ ain't shaatnez.

Only how can you ■ out without breeches? You can't move an inch if you're not wearing breeches—'strewth!

And to make things worse the dayan, who might have found some sort of dodge to get 'em out of the mess, didn't happen to be in the House of Study. So clothes began to flutter to the floor like the leaves ■ autumn—slow and regretful-like.

And the next day came and the next day went. . . .

The old boys say the tailors never had such a good time like then, from the best of them to the 'prentice-boys and the menders and patchers, ever since there was a Ruzhan. And some folk go one better and say ever since God started off the tailoring in the Garden of Eden. Because everybody went lining up outside their houses, telling 'em the tale, shmoozing them, toadying to 'em, for all they'd been looked on like dirt all the week before. And to listen to some of the householders, you'd think there'd never been anything so fine as tailoring, and it was the highest-class sort of work you could ever imagine; and all because they were afraid the tailors might forget them.

And for why?

Because there wasn't nobody then who didn't need a tailor, and there wasn't any sort of clothes as didn't come to the tailors to be fixed. And the tailors had a real busy on, showing a leg before dawn, and sitting and sewing till near midnight getting rid of every scrap of shaatnez like searching for bread-crumbs on Chometz Botel night before Passover.

And if you never saw Ruzhan then you never saw a fine building in your life like it says about the Temple. You never saw such an outlandish sort of place. Until they got rid of every scrap of shaatnez and attended to the jackets and the fur coats, and put their breeches to rights so as they could stick their noses out o' doors, everybody went about in blankets and sheets and table-clothes and coloured wraps and warm kerchiefs, and covered themselves over with dressing gowns and put on all sorts of clothes with the linings and extras ripped out so's there'd be no question of shaatnez. And as for us little boys, those of us as didn't stay at home altogether went off to Hebrew School wearing our mothers' or grannies' old bodices and vests and suchlike.

—Well, and that's what Ruzhan's like. And now go and find all that in one of your up-to-date edumicated encyclopedias.

## GENESIS

By OSHER BEILIN

Osher Beilin, born in Kiev, Ukraine, 1881. His father wrote for the Hebrew Press. Beilin was Secretary for several years to Shalom Aleichem. Studied ■ Freiburg. Afterwards settled in London, contributed to many Hebrew and Yiddish papers and periodicals in England and abroad. Was editor for a time of the London Yiddish dailies, "Jewish Journal," and "Jewish Express." Published numerous stories, several in book form. A volume of his stories in English, "Baptism and Other Stories" appeared in 1932. Has contributed to the "Evening Standard" Short Story Series, 1933.

THE festival was past. Heavy, commonplace dejection gnawed at the heart of the village. The cold, convulsive fingers of a sickly-yellow autumn sun were pointing out the dismembered Tabernacles. Vexed with each other and with themselves, the men were cold and estranged when they met after the indiscriminate comradeship and dancing at the Rejoicing of the Law. It seemed that the whole zest of living had been drained to the dregs and was now gone from man for ever. The days after the holidays seemed for utter boredom to fling themselves betimes at the misty dragging nights ; as if to rid themselves of themselves.

The streets looked desolate. Whip in hand, Fishel, the waggoner, was straying about, stopping householders and bewailing his misfortunes in a hoarse voice. His jade "Sonka," may the pest take her, had died suddenly. It was almost impossible to imagine that this was the same Fishel who had been racing around only a few days before in the mouldy, wrinkled old topper sacred to *Purim* and *Simchath Torah* ; and who had then been the hero of the day. And though each one knew in his own heart that Fishel would have to be provided with a horse—after all, a man burdened with a family could not be left to starve—yet now no one would dole him out even one kind word. He turned from each man as one lost, and his orphaned whip beat the air in its distress.

The Jews stood melancholy ■ the market-place, at the doors of

their shops, not yet broken in to the workaday world. They yawned ; and, as if to satisfy themselves that they did their duty, through half-closed mouths called the peasants into their shops. The peasants trudged with lazy paces just as if they wanted to see betimes which shops it would best pay them to plunder during the fast-approaching recruiting days, when they would revel in their cups. They slaughtered bleeding water-melons with painted little wooden knives, they chewed ; they examined the Jews, wondering if they really were the same " Moshkas " and " Berkas " who had turned the world upside down a few days ago, dancing and prancing about just as if they had all gone mad for twenty-four hours. Now they looked still stranger, still more incomprehensible.

The Sabbath of Genesis began its laborious approach. The assistant beadle, Baruch the Hunchback, called out that the shops were to be closed in honour of the Sabbath, and his thin, piping voice carried like a smothered cry for help, and spread forthwith. The market-place was deserted ; it looked like a desolate graveyard. Everyone hurried home, dreaming of crawling into bed and sleeping—sleeping the whole Sabbath through.

At the synagogue, Reb Yossel the beadle began to prepare wine for the Havdala blessing. He placed it in the Holy Ark. The Scrolls of the Law were leaning back, trembling with their gracious, joyful compassion, and resting themselves after the dancing at *Simchath Torah*. Each Scroll had one thin leg, and the other swollen, and bandaged with the 613 precepts. Back to the beginning : Genesis again. A little bell shivered—a golden, melancholy shiver, as if to test its own voice. Reb Yossel closed the Holy Ark, and began to light the lamps.

The door opened, and there came into the synagogue a tall, broad-shouldered man, with a thin blond beard ; so thin that one saw through the beard his beardless face. From under his overcoat there protruded a pair of top boots, with big lugs and folds like an accordion. On the head, with its skull shorn in the Gentile fashion, was pushed back a cap with a shiny peak. He remained standing in the middle of the synagogue, and looked about him on all sides.

" What do you want, neighbour ? " Reb Yossel asked him in Russian from where he stood.

It was not unusual for the great stream of light which poured

from the synagogue to attract the attention of a Gentile, who would come in when the Holy Spirit of Queen Sabbath was hovering about the hall. He would take off his cap and remain standing with his bare, flaxen, tousled head of hair, looking about him, sardonically listening to the strange prayers. Suddenly he would begin to shake himself to and fro and mimic the prayers at the top of his voice ; then he would rush out of the synagogue with a curse, by this profane behaviour desecrating the holy atmosphere ; and in the air one could feel the sorrow of the Divine Presence in Exile.

The man did not remove his cap. With quiet, humble steps he followed the voice, came up to the beadle, stretched out his hand, and said :

" Shalom Alechem—Peace be unto you."

The greeting was said as though he wished to mimic a Jew. Reb Yossel did not take the hand, but repeated the question :

" What do you want, countryman ? "

" I am a Jew . . . Jew . . ." replied the other, in broken Yiddish. " I convert . . . proselyte . . . Ten years Jew . . . By God . . . Stay here Sabbath——"

He thrust his hand into his bosom and drew thence a document which he held out to the beadle. The other took it and he stared at him to see what sort of an effect it would have. Reb Yossel examined the document for some time ; then suddenly his face began to gleam, and he hastily began pulling on his overcoat. One arm danced so madly with elation, that it would not go into the sleeve.

" Ma shmechem—What is your name ? " he asked the stranger, not knowing himself why he was addressing him in the Holy Tongue.

" Abraham, Abraham," the other replied.

" Alechem Shalom—Ger Zedek—Unto you be peace, Reb Abraham, proselyte ! " responded Reb Yossel, shaking his hand, and in the voice in which he pronounced the benediction : " Come, Reb Abraham. You are an esteemed guest, a highly esteemed guest. Come ! "

He caught hold of his sleeve, and took him to the Rabbi.

The group of Jews who had come to the synagogue to greet the Sabbath were astonished to see that in the seats of honour at the eastern wall close to the Holy Ark, there sat right beside the Rabbi,

Reb Zemach Dovid, a man of Christian appearance dressed in non-Jewish garb. Beside the Rabbi, with his patriarchal Jewish beard, on whose noble brow shone the light of the Holy Law, his neighbour looked still more non-Jewish, a real "Cossack." He sat there humbly, looking into his prayer-book, keeping the place with his finger. And his lips moved slowly, devoutly. It seemed as if the labour were not easy.

"A ger! A righteous proselyte!" Reb Yossel whispered in the ear of each seat holder.

The eyes of the congregation were directed towards the eastern wall all the time. After prayers, the men surrounded the guest. And with a plentiful hand, his eyes filled with pleasure and good-humour, the stranger dispensed his greetings of "Peace be unto you!" School-boys entangled themselves about his shiny top-boots, like friendly kittens, and stroked him, as one stroked a tamed animal which one no longer fears.

The news about the convert was carried through the whole village immediately after prayers, and evoked great curiosity. After the meal, the Jews gathered round the Rabbi's house, where the guest was staying, and into which only the most esteemed men were privileged to enter. There, Abraham, the righteous proselyte, sat at the table, between the Rabbi, and the wealthy Reb Alter, a badly modelled Jew, too long and too narrow; behind his back people referred to him as Alter the Straw. The ger kept his hands stuck into his sleeves; the glitter of the Sabbath candles gleamed in the glossy peak of his cap; and his shy, naïve face reminded one of early Christian martyrs.

Those men who came out of the Rabbi's house were surrounded by people eager to hear the news. Stories were told of whole villages of peasants beginning to go over to the Jewish faith; of how the light of the Holy Law was beginning to shine on young and old, on women and children. Stories were told of how those people were being made to suffer terrible tortures by the authorities—imprisonment, banishment to Siberia. But they would not give way, and were bearing their sufferings with joy.

Stories were told of how a great many of them were prepared to go to the Holy Land, there to make the earth bear fruit anew, and rebuild the ruins. And stories were told that Reb Abraham was their messenger and that, putting his life in danger, he was going from village to village to win new souls to the Jewish faith.


Late at night, when the Sabbath candles had already gone out, men still kept guard at the Rabbi's house, where Abraham the ger was sleeping, his blond little beard sticking out.

The pale Sabbath morning was surely astonished to see men rising so early—even earlier than on an ordinary week-day morning. Young and old sprang quickly out of their beds ; and the street was soon alive once more. Men were beginning to flow to the synagogue from all sides. Prayers were still a long way off ; but everyone was anxious to hear news of the stranger, to talk about him. The synagogue was quickly filled ; just as if it were not the Sabbath of Genesis but the Day of Atonement.

The Rabbi left his home shortly before his guest. They did not go together, because they wished to attract no attention, and wished to awaken no suspicion. A few minutes later, youngsters came running up breathlessly, one after the other, like arrows shot from bows with the reports " He comes ! He comes ! "

The guest arrived with his humble gait ; and the crowd split itself into two, making a way for him to the eastern wall. The beadle walked in advance, and seated the stranger beside the Rabbi. With bashful movements he wrapped himself in his praying-shawl, and opening his prayer-book he began feeling the words with his fingers, and he betook himself to the difficult task of praying.

The synagogue was all astir. Reb Yossel's banging on the desk and his cry of " Hush ! " were, on this occasion but half heeded ; and the Rabbi's eye-brows did not knit themselves with the usual earnestness because the decorum of praying was disturbed. In vain did Sender the Cantor labour to sweeten the prayers with his melodies in honour of the guest, and in honour of the full congregation—may no evil eye harm them ! No one gave him the least attention, each person was busied with the ger ; each pushed himself forward to have a good view of him, from his cap with its shiny peak down to the legs of his top-boots. Not one seemed to have his fill of looking at him. What a guest ! What an event !

And now they arrived at the calling  to the reading of the Torah. Of a sudden, a solemn stillness spread over the synagogue. The beloved Torah ! Never before, one imagines, was

the Torah so dear to one ; never before was ■ so intensely alive ! The Eternal Torah which was beginning to be a fount of light to others, to strangers ! Over there at that moment sat a man who for the sake of the Torah had abandoned everything ; who had been prepared to withstand all tribulations and to devote his life to troubles, only in order to bask in its light. And he was not the only one. Behind him, it was said, stood thousands of men and women ready to offer up their lives for the Torah. Suddenly all hearts were filled to overflowing and sighs of gladness broke from all souls. And when the Cantor made his way towards the reader's desk with the Scroll of the Laws in his hand, everybody felt like embracing it, pressing it to him, weeping for love, for joy.

" Arise, Reb Abraham, righteous ger, as third ! "

The silence was as great as though not a living being were in the synagogue. The guest rose from his seat and with quiet footsteps, made his way to the reader's desk. Loving eyes followed him ; from the women's gallery women piously watched him, and old dames wiped their eyes for joy. He ascended, covered his head with his praying-shawl ; out of the silence they heard a ringing, passionate kiss, and afterwards a blessing in a thickish chesty voice, pronounced in a queer outlandish accent, as if the words had become sticky and each tore itself free from the others with great difficulty :

" Bless ye the Lord who is blessed—— "

" Bless ye the Lord who is blessed for ever and ever ! "

The congregation smiled with pleasure, was delighted, as one is delighted with a child who can just stammer out its first human words. The blessings had poured an elixir of life into their hearts.

And a great joy showed itself in every countenance, and beamed from all eyes ; and Jews made peace one with the other, felt themselves near to one another, brethren, children of the One Beneficent Father in Heaven. The wealthy Reb Alter did not now wait for the people to pay their respects to him, but immediately after the prayers, he went first towards each individual with a " Good Sabbath ! " smiling, patting everyone on the shoulder.

Afterwards, the glee spread itself over the entire village, made its way into every home, and forced itself back into the street with song. One went to the other to say the blessing over wine ; they visited one another's homes, and drank " Long life ! " to

each other, their eyes turned up to heaven. God does not forget His People Israel. Lowly as the dust are we become amid the nations of the world, spat at and trodden upon by all ; but at last the sun of Truth and Righteousness has begun to shine upon earth. The Lord of the Universe is a loving father. With one hand He punishes, but with the other He heals.

"Days of Messiah!" went forth the report from the Rabbi's house, where the select had come for brandy and cakes, and where learned men were expounding Torah. Reb Akiva, the scribe, a tiny little Jew just twice the size of his red beard, a great cabbalist who lived more on fasts than by writing mezuzot, clearly showed by means of the Cabbala, that the world was drawing near the "End of Days," and that the "Day of Judgment" might be attained by stretching out the hands for it. And this report was borne from mouth to mouth. Messianic days! It is time, sweet Father in Heaven! Oh it has long been time!

Consoling old verses became fresh and new once more, and holy words of comfort were carried about on men's lips. The time was at hand when all nations would live as brothers; the wolf and the lamb would pasture together; and peace and unity would reign throughout the world. No more bloodshed. All children of the One God!

Jews made peace with the world. The bitterness had all at once disappeared. Forgiveness and pardon filled the soul. On meeting Gentiles in the street they now looked at them with altogether different eyes. They seemed more human. The fear was gone. After all, they are really not so bad as one thinks. It was true that soon the recruiting days would be there once again, and Jewish shops would—God forbid!—find themselves once more being plundered, as happened last year and the year before—an evil memory! And new windows would have to be put into the synagogue once again; and Jewish girls would have to avoid the streets; yet, despite all that, the world was not Sodom and Gomorrah. Our good Jews—may they have long lives!—are in the habit of exaggerating a bit. After all, when ■ is said and done, these things are only done by embittered youngsters who are torn away from their homes and from their parents. But have they no souls at all then? Doesn't a Gentile feel? What ■ we were tested? And we must not forget that we are, after all, in exile among them. What sort of exile would it be then if we

lived in peace and in happiness ? Who knows ? Maybe Abraham the righteous ger himself also threw stones at Jews once upon a time, in the days when he was an Ivan ? God willing, the Ivans of to-day would also become Reb Abrahams in due time. Indeed, it was not so terrible if one thought it over with care. You see. You see, if Judaism were an easy thing, what would be the good of it ?

The burden of exile had suddenly ceased to be a burden. Shoulders straightened. The Almighty had not forgotten His people.

The Sabbath mid-day sleep was abandoned. It occurred ■ no one to sleep away even a single minute of such a day. Fishel, the waggoner, could not possibly wait until the Sabbath had terminated ; and he appeared in the streets in his creased, mouldy Purim and Simchath Torah top hat. He was tipsy. Surrounded by a crowd of youngsters, he mimicked, as usual, the " German " whom he had once seen at the railway-station. He showed how he greeted a " Mamzell," mimicked him taking off his hat to her, twirling his moustache, and kissing the " Mamzell's " hand. Oh, the " Germans " ! What donkeys they were ! Then suddenly Fishel remembered his mare, which he had found dead in the stable the day before, swollen, with glazed eyes, and with two legs which stuck out, like cart-shafts—may the cholera seize her ! And he began to cry at the top of his voice ; and, together with the crowd of boys, he said a memorial prayer over the carcase of the mare " Sonka," owned by Reb Fishel, son of Reb Shmerel.

But the people kept their joy within themselves and did not allow it to pour itself out, in honour of the holy Sabbath. It only shone in all eyes, and pressed sweetly upon every soul.

It was only after the end of Sabbath that the fountains of joy were opened wide and began to stream forth lustily. After the greeting " A good week ! " the people surrounded Reb Abraham at the synagogue, and they let themselves go in a dance round the reader's desk. Their legs lifted themselves and leaped about together with their overflowing hearts. Their fervour grew from minute to minute. They carried the ger round in procession. Dear Reb Abraham ! Darling Reb Abraham ! Little brotherkin Abraham !

And while the people were rejoicing within the synagogue, others were working with all their might and main at the home of

Reb Alter the wealthy ; kneading and baking, roasting and frying and stewing. Tables were being laid in one room after the other. Pessalle, the wealthy man's wife, a dark, charming little woman with large, lively eyes and pale, girlish hands, who was always suffering from headaches and always rubbing her temples with eau de Cologne, was arranging everything, and seeing that all was going as it should. The cellars were opened, and the wine was dug out—the wine which Reb Alter's father had buried on the day of his son's wedding, fifteen years before. The Almighty had not blessed them with children ; and part of the wine had been taken up for the party in honour of the Torah which they had presented two years before. The remainder was to have been dug up to celebrate their silver wedding. But who wanted to wait ten years, when the Almighty had sent them such a joyous and sacred occasion to-day ! Could there possibly be a greater festival than that of this day ?

Reb Alter himself went up to the reader's desk in the synagogue, and announced that he was inviting the whole congregation to the "Departure of the Queen Sabbath" ; and let none dare stay away.

The meal was on a royal scale ; and during the time the people were feasting, Elimelech, the musician, and his orchestra showed once for all what they could do.

After supper, the tables were taken from the big room ; and then the people betook themselves to dancing with a will. Then, all of a sudden, they were told to clear a space. The Rabbi and Abraham rose from their places, and coming into the middle of the room, the Rabbi took out his red handkerchief. He took hold of one end, Abraham took hold of the other, and the two danced together. Reb Zernach Dovid flung back his head, and with eyes closed tight as if they could not bear any light, he ecstasically danced a dance of praise to the moan of Elimelech's fiddle. Abraham kept his eyes modestly fixed on the floor, and dragged his top-boots awkwardly after him. Tears showed themselves on many faces when the people saw that couple dancing ; and the oldest present swore that they had never yet witnessed such rejoicing.

And, once more "Long life !" and yet again "Long life !" The toasts began to warm up their guest ; as time went on, he grew livelier and jollier. Suddenly he rose from his place, an

altogether different man—fresh, straight, and powerful, just as he had shot up in one minute. His cap was pushed back on his head and his face was aflame. With a wave of the hand he put aside those around him ; and he cried out to the musicians :

“ Kossack dance ! ”

The people moved away ; and he let himself go across the room in a dance.

This was a different dance, quite other than those of the evening. He span round like a whirlwind, shrank into himself and stretched himself upwards, danced sitting in the air, and clapped his hands on the floor. Then he sprang aloft once again. Placing one hand on the back of his neck, holding the other on high, bearing himself ever swifter and swifter, he twirled on one foot like a spinning-top. And then he danced on his hands, with his feet in the air. His little prayer-book dropped out from his top-boot, and, turning a somersault, he caught it in his teeth. And once again he started to dance, swifter, livelier, more full of fire every moment. The floor trembled under his feet. The musicians did all they could, to the limit of their strength. He began to accompany himself, whistling, yelling, shouting, and singing :

“ Tula, Tula, Tula, Tula,  
Tula, rodina moya ! ”

The Rabbi looked on, smiling like a father at the child of his old age. Abraham became ever more lively and daring, distant winds of freedom began to blow upon him. Old fires flickered anew in his soul. Suddenly, he stopped short for an instant, and his eyes lighted on Paselle, the mistress of the house. He ran over to her, caught her in his powerful arms, and carried her across the parlour :

“ Dance, my little dear, dance ! For Christ's sake ! ”

The mistress of the house, terrified, tore herself free from his Gentile arms. The Rabbi cried sternly :

“ Abraham ! ”

“ Rabbi, little father ! ” he pleaded, slightly loosing his hold on her. “ Tell her to dance.”

“ Abraham ! ” cried the rabbi still more sternly, wrinkling up his brow. “ Do not forget that you are a Jew.”

Suddenly the other came to. His shoulders drooped. His body shrank and shrivelled ; and his face once again took on its

humble expression. Once again, he was Reb Abraham, the righteous ger. He sat down in silence.

And, once again, the people gave themselves up to rejoicing, toasted one another "Long life!"; sang and danced. The fiddies sobbed with joy; the flute wailed with happiness. With a groan of gladness the bass accompanied; sadly proud the trumpet rang; and the cymbals clapped together long into the night.

The autumn night was still. Only at the house of Reb Alter the wealthy one, the liveliness and jollity continued.

There seemed no end to their rejoicing. And the pale, cold, week-day dawn listened to the great salary being paid to the Creator of the world with joy; for He does not forsake His children, and in fire and in water, He is ever with His Chosen, the People of Israel.

## THE WAY OUT

By JOSEPH CHAIM BRENNER

*Translated by I. M. LASK*

Joseph Chaim Brenner, born 1881, in the Province of Chernigov, Ukraine, killed in Palestine pogrom in 1921. One of the best loved figures in Hebrew literature. He was brought up in poverty. His father was a Hebrew teacher of religion. He studied at the Yeshibah. Afterwards went to Bialystock, intending to become a manual worker, but took to writing. Lived in several other Russian towns, active in the Jewish Socialist Party Bund. Became a Tolstoyan, and dreamt of working on the land in a commune. Lived in London from 1905 to 1908, publishing a Hebrew monthly, which he wrote, set up, and distributed himself. Went to Palestine in 1908. Edited several Hebrew papers there. Taught at the Hebrew High School in Jaffa. Afterwards worked as an agricultural labourer and on road building. An idealist, who was always suffering, poverty, disillusionment, mental and physical anguish, but preached resignation to himself and others. The conscience of Hebrew literature. Published many stories, novels, plays and essays in Hebrew and Yiddish.

The official report of the Government Commission of Enquiry into the Palestine disturbances of 1921 states in part : A horrible murder was that of Mr. Brenner, an author of repute. He was living with five other Jews in an isolated house off the Ramleh Road. Five bodies, those of Brenner and four others were found lying in a footpath, beaten or stabbed to death. The sixth body was found 100 metres away, with the hands tied behind the back.

### I

EARLY every morning, when the little train from Tulkarem arrived to stack wood for fuel, the old work-instructor would go out on his terrace, shade his eyes and gaze away from the hamlet to see if they had not come.

They should have been there. They might come any day.

It was by that little train coming to stack wood that they should arrive—from over there where the trouble was. From the place where the land had been made desolate, trees had been hewn down and dwellings destroyed ; where the few colonists had paid

the soldiers billeted on them to cut down their last almond trees and bring them to them, the colonists, as fuel ; where unground Indian corn was regularly eaten to give the belly its fill and escape the curse of famine ; where damp, filthy, stinking, verminous, rat-infested booths had for months on end provided shelter for women and children freezing in winter's cold and twisted in sickness ; where four or five out of every hundred were removed dead day after day ; where there was no place on which to set the dozens who fell ill every day, where there was no shirt for them or sheet to set under them ; where the inhabitants did nothing all day long but listen to the guns, argue military tactics and moan, " Oh, the Migration Committee's killing us ! It's murdering us ! " ; where thieves, robbers and swindlers were growing wealthy, heaping up napoleons, while dozens of hale and hearty lads came from the north, ate eggs and jam, played cards day and night and awaited the long-delayed " redemption."

" Can you hear ? They're shooting ! "

" Our folk, that must be."

" What are you talking about ? Those shots don't come from our folk."

" Ours are lying over there, and that's where the shots are from."

" And if it's from ours, it means *they're* on their way."

" The aeroplanes are hanging about all day long."

" And this morning one flew round for two hours straight off."

" And have you seen the Golem ? I've seen it."

(The Golem was the captive balloon.)

" The rains are late."

" Well, one thing's sure ; when the rains are over we'll go on to Jaffa."

But the rains had passed, Passover had gone without unleavened or leaven bread for that matter, and instead of returning to the South, to Jaffa, the homeless exiles had had to bundle their rags and tats together and move weakly north again.

And what would happen ? What would happen ? They would all come, spent, broken, starving, naked, sick with infectious diseases, would be dropped from the train and would remain there under the heavens, consumed by the sun's heat in the daytime and by the cold and dew at night ; bits of broken earthen-

were unable to move, incapable of shifting for themselves in anything, in anything. . . . Who would give them food or drink ? Who would heal them ? What would happen ?

## II

Another few days passed, yet they did not come. There were rumours that they had been sent direct to Galilee and would not be seen thereabouts. The heart began to beat more easily and thoughts to return to the daily round.

And then, one flaming May morning, the news was passed on :

"Forty-two !"

"Where ?"

"There. Can't you see them round the wood-stack ? That's where they're creeping about."

"Well, if so," the old work-instructor was all confused, "something has to be done, hasn't it—water . . ."

"They're already filling a barrel with water to take out to them. . . . They mustn't come here to drink. . . . Children here. . . . The doctor says we mustn't have anything to do with them till they've been disinfected."

"Only the horses aren't back yet. . . . Nothing to take it over on," came the report alongside the news about the water.

"And how about bread ?" The old man was not listening. "We must let them have some bread to go on with, at least. A couple of loaves for a bite."

It was a tiny spot with just a single oven, and not too much bread. He himself had two loaves. One he put in the basket ; after a moment's thought he broke off half the other loaf and added it. Then he went to each of the five houses in turn to "borrow" loaves and slices of bread for the migrants. Forty-two souls. . . .

The womenfolk knew their duty. It's hard for a housewife to remain without bread, but those people had been starving all the winter through. . . . Now they had come, thirsty, hungry, unfortunate. One woman borrowed loaves, half-loaves and slices from the other—and the basket filled up.

Then the old man hurried to the new arrivals : the water-barrel had not been prepared yet. There were all kinds of delays.

## III

Human shadows. Old men. Old women. They lay beside scattered bundles. Women with uncovered bosoms in torn shifts. Unwashed girl-faces from which the marks of youth had vanished. Seven or eight dried-up orphans.

"Jews! Don't rush! Don't crowd round!" cried a small young man with a yellow beard who came over to the bringer of bread. "It must be divided in order, the same to everyone according to the list. Sh, sh. Here's the list, let's share it out! You can't behave like that! You'll tear the old man to pieces."

"Bread! Bread!" rejoiced an old migrant woman. "Here's England; they hand out bread."

"And wagons?" demanded one ginger man, the only ginger person among them, who stood beside five strong and heavy boxes with iron locks. "Is this all the Committee has sent us? Rogues! They're all rogues and swindlers. May the name and fame of the Migration Committee be blotted out! At Kfar Saba we were promised hills and mountains and here we're allowed to stay out in the open. And nobody thinks of how to move us to Kolonia!"

The old instructor answered him, explaining that he was not from the Migration Committee of the neighbouring colony but had come of his own accord from the outlying hamlet nearby. In a little while he, the instructor, would go himself to the branch of the Migration Committee in the colony to inform them of the arrivals.

"And what would it be possible, for instance, to get at the colony to eat with the bread?" asked one young woman. "I shared out bread myself at Kfar Saba. Honey; they say there's lots and lots of honey here. Butter, honey—and how much is meat a pound?"

"And how about it if I wanted to settle in the colony?" asked the wife of the ginger Jew after receiving her share; on her own statement she was the sister of the young woman who had herself distributed bread at Kfar Saba. "Could I find an apartment here?—A room at least, but with a ceiling and roof. . . . Not for nothing, God forbid—I'm quite prepared to pay—let them ask what they want. Only I'm sick of living without an apartment."

"Woe's me, everybody knows that at Kfar Saba I had a grand apartment," lamented the distributress.

"A doctor, bring a doctor here," another woman caught at the old man. "Come and have a look, Mister Jew—the baby's dying. She can't eat bread, a two-year-old child and looks like two months. The father had to stay in Petah Tikva. She hasn't even tasted a spoonful of water for two whole days. The mother's starved and has no milk. On the way there—come and have a look, Mister Jew."

In the arms of a barefoot woman of about twenty, lean as the board beside her, who sat alone some distance away among the trees, quivered a naked baby, white and consumed by mosquitos, lice and bugs. Covered with sores, she lay dumb and silent with open, glassy eyes.

"If only—some milk," could be heard the ghost of a breath from the mother.

"It's a doctor you want here, a doctor," urged the woman who had called him over.

"Did you ever see anything like it?" interrupted one of the other women. "A doctor and milk is what they must have, and my children haven't even any water."

"There's no milk to be got at the hamlet," stammered the old man. "But there's water there. They'll bring it in a little while, and for the present—have you any vessel?" he turned to the complaining woman. "Come with me and I'll give you water. It's only ten minutes away."

"There's water nearer at hand!" said the young man with the list in his hand, "over by the bridge."

"God forbid!" the old man shuddered. "Don't drink it. It's swamp water. There's sweet water over at the hamlet. Who's coming with me for some?"

Nobody went. Who would go that distance? The angry young woman gave her kettle to a volunteer orphan and sent him to the bridge to fetch water from the neighbourhood for her children.

#### IV

The colony Committee Room, where migration affairs were also decided, was closed. Everything went on as usual round about. The old instructor sat in the porch and felt, uneasily,

how all the ardour flaming within him while he hurried from the "station" to the colony was beginning to die away in front of this closed door. He had imagined that he would bang the table with his shrivelled fist, would shout (and maybe would drive his long fingernails into the beard of the committee chairman): "Murderers! Why are you sitting still doing nothing?" But during the half-hour before the closed door some kind of petrification affected him. The beadle passing by had told him that the chairman would arrive in a little while—he was taking a nap just then; but even when he came, what would he, the teacher, have to say to him? And, after all, what was the chairman able to do, really?

"I've come to tell you," he began in a low voice when the chairman arrived about an hour later, "that there are forty-two souls, migrants, arrived. . . ."

"I know," answered the chairman.

"Well, what's going to happen?" asked the instructor shamefacedly.

"What ought to happen? I've arranged that they shouldn't be allowed in the colony without prior disinfection. . . . And anyhow, these are going straight ahead and have nothing to do here in the colony. . . ."

"Yes, so to-day yet they'll get wagons?" asked the glad instructor.

"This wagon affair is a bad business just now," said the vice-chairman as he entered. "It's the work season now, and which of the farmers will want to hire out a wagon? A wagon—why, it's gold."

"All the same, we'll impound two wagons till the morning," said the chairman with pride.

"Two wagons for forty-two souls?" commented the instructor.

"Well anyhow—for the baggage. The people can go afoot."

"They're sick and suffering mostly—and children. . . ."

"We know, we know," the vice cut him off. "■ we can get a wagon—that's a hundred and twenty gold francs." The chairman was silent.

"And to-night they're to stay in the open?"

The vice made no answer. After a few moments' silence he began to tell the chairman of the conversation he had had over the phone with the chief of the Central Migration Committee.

There had been officers in the room and he had not wanted to state, in front of them, how many napoleons the Central Head had to send for the expenses of the new arrivals, so he'd put it cleverly and said twice as much as had been sent the day before yesterday, which meant a hundred and fifty napoleons. And the money had already arrived by special messenger.

"So we can buy the durra?" asked the chairman.

"They want thirty-nine mejidis a bushel."

"Really!" cried the chairman. "We ought to buy. We can't trouble about prices now."

"I believe you still have some durra left for sale?"

And within a moment the building was overflowing with grain-dealers and agents. The vice stuck his hands in his breeches pockets and shovelled out streams of gold napoleons. One agent could be heard joking:

"It's all right. Migrants aren't swine. They'll eat even durra like this."

"It's half dust!"

"Malesh!" (What's the odds!)

"So it's all decided?" The instructor suddenly broke in again. "They're to stay without shelter? And we'll have the right to say 'Our hands have not shed this blood'?"

And as there was no answer he flung another verse among them.

"How are the hearts become stone!"

"But they're used to it," said one of the farmers who had been summoned for hiring wagons. "They've already spent a whole winter at Kfar Saba!"

"Since they haven't been disinfected we can't have anything to do with them. It's doctor's orders," explained the head of the colony.

"Then you'd better keep clear of me. Because I've been with them, without any disinfection. And I've brought all the microbes with me!" screeched the old instructor.

"Very clever, I must say!" The vice had become very serious and stopped jingling the napoleons. "Really, you shouldn't have come here, you know."

"There's no joking in these matters."

"You can't fly in the face of hygiene."

And negotiations were finished.

## V

The instructor stayed overnight in the colony. He could not return to his room, for he doubted whether the wagons would be sent in the morning if there was nobody to urge them on.

At midnight a cold mist descended and covered this entire neighbourhood. He stood outside, gazed at the wisps of vapour, shivered silently, but did not enter any house. No, he would not enter any house.

He wandered about the colony through the mist until dawn. When it became light he took up his stand before the closed door of the Council room. When the two wagons left at nine in the morning the mist had not entirely vanished.

He rode to the woodpile in one of the wagons, thinking that if no fresh ones were sent to-day, those who arrived yesterday could be fixed up somehow. The poorest would be sent on further, while those with baggage, if they insisted on staying there, and particularly if they made it quite clear that they would not "be a burden," could be disinfected and allowed into the colony.

But if an additional transport arrived to-day, with all this disorder and indifference round about, then he was lost.

He drew close and saw, through the mist clinging to the shivering bodies, that they had not increased.

Everything shrank together within him, and a few tears fell.

Apart from the ginger Jew who was hidden within a tiny booth made by two Yemenites since the previous day out of his trunks, linen curtains, sticks and eucalyptus branches, they were all, grown-ups and children, lying on the ground, shivering and huddled up with damp and thirst.

"Sodom!" The yellow-bearded young man, who seemed to have grown smaller overnight, passed judgment on the colony.

"And what are you going to give us to-day, Mister Jew?" asked the woman who had spoken gratefully of "England" the day before.

"They're going to bring bread," the old man promised. "Durra bread," he found it his duty to add.

He cast his eyes about him for the mother of the sick child (he had succeeded in getting a pint of milk for her in a tin can), but could not see her. She had gone to the colony. Gone to the doctor. Without prior disinfection. Paid no attention to the order. She had gone with her child.

"And what would you advise, Mister Jew?" came the distraction. "Should I stay here or go on?"

The reasons for and against were numberless. The chief reason for staying was: how was it possible to go ahead when the saviours might arrive there the very next day.

Meanwhile the trunks of the ginger Jew were loaded on the wagons with the aid of the wagoners, and the young man who had set himself in charge. The trunks were full of cloth and it was impossible to shift them. A great quantity of toil, panting and moaning, was sacrificed to them. And once they were loaded, the Jewish carter, who had been sent by one of the farmers, refused to allow as much as a straw to be added. The orphans were lifted up and lifted down half a dozen times. But he wasn't going to kill his mules for migrants! It didn't matter! There were other wagons in the colony and the Migration Committee wasn't so sick and sore that it couldn't hire as many as it needed! It was the second carter, the Arab, who had no clear idea as to what the Migration Committee was, who consented to take, beside the three trunks on the wagon (the Jew carried only two) a few extra bundles as well as two impatient old men, who climbed up—as one might to martyrdom in order to Hallow the Name—resolved to go on whatever happened.

"And they're not going to send any more wagons?" asked the other migrants in astonishment, staring at one another.

"And they won't give me and my children a wagon at all?" The woman who had demanded water the day before could not understand it.

After turmoil, shrieks, curses, gnashing of teeth, arguments, demands, good advice, inventions, discoveries and witticisms, the greater part of the caravan remained where they were that day as well.

The remnants of the shelter of the red Jew, who had journeyed further, led to many quarrels. Each one claimed to have taken possession first, till finally they pulled the cover to pieces and scattered it in all directions.

The orphans sat playing on the scattered branches spitting the good water—which had at length been brought—one over the other.

And the instructor returned to the colony to report. There were a few youngsters who had not gone to work and who were

willing to spend the day arranging the disinfection and putting up tents, so that those left behind might enter the colony and not sleep out in the open.

But the matter was not arranged. The Colony Council claimed that the authorities did not permit migrants to enter the colony. This colony, the vice explained, was a military camp, and the authorities were afraid that the migrants might spread sicknesses among the soldiers.

The tents were left halfway.

The bath-house owner did not want to let the bath-house be used for disinfection when he was asked. It was impossible to get a big pot at any price. The migrants remained where they were and the old instructor with them, idle and powerless. That night the dew fell on him and he had a bad spell of fever. And in the morning the train brought another hundred and forty-seven souls from Tulkarem. There was no way out.

## VI

Fever flaming within him, the old man stormed from the migrants' camp back to the colony, feeling himself lost. But there he found his way out.

Among the trees on the slope, beside some migrants' rubbish which had reached there Lord knows how, stood a group of men including some ragged and hungry Turkish soldiers, round a thin, barefoot woman who sat on the ground with a dead child beside her.

The dead child, who had been naked as at birth in the migrants' camp two days before, now lay in a little shift.

"The doctor put a spoonful of milk into her mouth; he poured it in but she didn't swallow . . . it was plain that nothing could be done," said one of the bystanders.

The mother herself was silent. She sat barefoot and lean as she had two days before. She wanted them to take the dead child away for burial, and not to forget to bring her, the living one, the child's rations of durra bread for that day. She was ravening with hunger.

There was no change in the child save for the shift. Her mouth was shut and her eyes were open. The pallor of her cheeks had neither increased nor lessened. The sores were as they had been.

"There's a little hoe. That soldier's holding it."

The old man took a bishlik from his pocket and turned to the soldier without a word, holding it up.

The man in soldier's uniform nodded. With a queer movement the old man picked up the tiny body and carried it straight to the cemetery as God-parents carry the eight-days child to the circumcision—on the two hands extended straight before him.

It was a hard way through sand. The feverish man set the body under his armpit whence it dangled. He strode with the last of his strength, the soldier in his tailless tarbush before him.

After a half-hour they reached their haven of desire.

The fence round the cemetery had been broken down. The staples were missing, and where they had been there were now deep, narrow holes in the ground.

He was covered with sweat, though he had taken a gramme and a half of quinine some hours back ; and his fever was beginning to leave him. It was already too much for him, though this load was not nearly as heavy as the basket of bread he had brought to the camp two days earlier. His eyes dimmed and he could not see. "Child, my child ! How lovely you are ! What a beautiful woman you could have become ! Who knows whose happiness enters the grave with you to-day ! Little girl, my little girl !"

His foot caught in one of the holes. He took it out quickly, not even feeling that he had dislocated the big toe of his left foot.

"Here !" said he to the soldier and stopped.

The soldier put his hoe to the ground and set to work. Simply, without argument or question. He continued for about ten minutes, like a big child playing with sand. When the hole had been dug he raised his childlike eyes to his commander, who was giving him the bishlik ; and the old man, who had meanwhile put the child on the sand, ordered him with eyes and gestures to dig deeper. . . .

"We must, so that the dogs shouldn't drag the body out," he thought.

The soldier went on ; the grave was prepared ; the digger straightened himself ; and the old man did all that was necessary. He took off the shift for some reason, lowered the sweet little body, wasted by mosquitoes and hunger, into the grave and covered it with loose earth with his own hands. The soldier put the discarded shift under his tailless tarbush, bent down, moved the shift from under the tarbush into a tear in his coat which resembled a pocket, and immediately began to devote himself to scattering earth in the grave, aiding in the burial of this daughter of a strange God.

They returned to the colony as fellow-workers might.

The old man was limping and could hardly walk. The big toe was painning more and more. But he felt that there was still something left for him to do, that the business was not at an end, that he could not part from his dark-skinned companion in such a fashion. When they reached the colony he entered a shop in order to treat him to a glass of wine, to drink with him and toast "Good health ! Good health, brother in adversity ! Good health, patient Anatolian peasant ! " But there was no wine in the shop ; the Mukhtar had taken it all. The Commandant was staying with him. All to the good, thought the old man as he remembered that wine is prohibited to Moslems and that the soldier might have been perplexed if he were treated to something forbidden. Instead he bought his companion a packet of cigarettes and a piece of hard, white cheese, added the bishlik, shook hands with him warmly, and the Turk departed full of heartfelt gratitude, the little child's shift gleaming white from his torn pocket.

But he, the old man, could not go. The hole left by the removal of the staple from the cemetery fence, doubtless for military purposes, had injured him seriously ; not until dark was he brought home from the colony on a donkey, with the aid of a worker-pupil.

At his request the pupil brought him a basin of cold water and left him.

It was growing dark in the room. He lay alone. He set his toe ■ the cold water, and ■ swelled so that later he could not even move to attend to his physical needs. But, anyway, he

was free of all other needs. Entirely free. The load was lifted.

The half-loaf, lying on his table among his books and linen for two days, reminded him that for three days he had not even eaten. But the pain in the toe was great enough to drive away all thought of food. For some reason he stretched out his hand to feel the bread, which had grown too dry to eat. And he felt sorry that he had not taken it with the other loaves. What a pity, what a pity, he thought, every crumb of bread now. . . . But the sorrow speedily passed and was replaced by a great relief in his heart. A bare ten minutes' walk away a hard, unpleasant night spread its wings over the third transport of transmigrants as well as sixty-nine souls who had arrived at noon, which was not the time arranged. He knew about it. His pupil had told him on the way. But it did not affect him. He did not venture out or go across to them. He could not walk. He had been relieved.

## A TALE OF TWO CAMELS

By A. REUBENI

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

A. Reubeni, born 1887, in South Russia. Went to America at the age of seventeen, but returned to Russia two years later, and was arrested for distributing arms for Jewish self-defence against the pogroms. Was imprisoned for eighteen months. In 1907 was sent to Siberia for life, but escaped in 1910 by way of Shanghai through China to Palestine, and has since lived in Jerusalem. Started writing there first in Russian, then in Hebrew and Yiddish. Set out in 1910 on a journey on foot round the world, walked through the Sinai Desert to Cairo, but then had to return to Jerusalem. When the pogrom took place in Palestine in 1920, he was sent to London in a delegation of three, he representing Palestine Jewish Labour (Chief Rabbi Jacob Meir represented the religious Jews, and Mr. David Yellin the middle-class) to protest to the British Government. His brother, I. Ben Zvi, is the leader of the Palestine Labour Movement, and one of the heads of the official Palestine Jewish Community. Rubenei has published many novels, stories and poems, both in Hebrew and Yiddish.

ON the return journey, going home to his village from Jerusalem, Achmed started out as was the custom, an hour past midnight. He would not venture on his way at evening, for at evening robbers and hyenas and devils and all manner of evil things abound on the road.

For some time he swayed drowsily in his seat through night and past mountains. The leading camel on which he was seated, was a huge beast, strong and knowing. Achmed did not have to guide it nor to urge it on. It knew the way, and strode ahead leisurely, half-dozing as it went. Tied by the bridle to the rope saddle, which looked like a big woven net, was another camel. It was thinner and less powerfully built than the first, and could hardly keep in step with it. Its movement was somewhat involved. ■ would stand still till the rope by which it was tied to the first camel had stretched taut and cut into its neck, and then it would suddenly run until its snout hit the flank of the first camel. The first camel never even noticed the collision. It strode forward like a well-

regulated piece of clock-work, without any hurry, and with long measured step.

His head wrapped in his abayah, Achmed swayed drowsily on his saddle-seat. At every step of the camel, he was thrown first back a little to the right, and then a little forward to the left. But he had been used to this for the last fifty years, and it did not disturb his slumbers. Sometimes he met camel-caravans going from the direction of Jaffa towards Jerusalem. He then half raised his head, half-opened his eyes, and threw them a curt "Saalam aleikum!" and without listening for the reply, fell back into the dream which the quiet night and the dark-outlined mountains were weaving about him.

With the approach of dawn, he encountered the slow-moving camel-caravans more often. "Howah! Howah!" came the drowsy monotonous cry of the drivers. At the side of the camels, catching them up, and passing them ran small grey asses gliding along like so many cellar-mice. They kicked up the sand as they went, and left it in clouds behind them. The drivers riding behind, made strange noises with their tongues, or cried through their noses: "Howah! Howah!" and hurried after the running herd.

Achmed was bumped out of his sleep by an unexpected jerk, which almost jolted him out of his saddle. He realised that the camel had stopped short. At the same time he saw a lad holding the camel by the neck, and squeaking in a frightened voice: "Yah Ami! Take care! . . . Trombil!"

The camel behind tore at its rope, twisting itself about in the middle of the road. Out of the darkness behind them came a sound of muttering. A fearful brilliant red flare poured itself about Achmed and blinded him. "Hold the little one!" he shouted to the lad. "It will break loose!"

He swung quickly out of the saddle, and dragged the frightened beasts to the edge of the road. They were obstinate. It seemed to them as if instead of saving them from the terror, Achmed was dragging them right up to the monster with the blood-red eyes, who was chasing them. They tugged at their ropes, and tried to hide behind each other, obstructing the whole roadway.

The automobile stopped. The noise of the motor continued for a while, and then ceased. The camels became calmer, and dragged their muzzles along the ground in search of grass, or corn dropped

by the caravans. They allowed themselves to be led away from the centre of the road.

As soon as the motor started again, however, both camels became maddened. They backed right into the middle of the road. Achmed and the lad who had chanced by in time to wake him, could do nothing. They shouted at the camels and beat them, and pulled them by their snouts. The four of them twisted themselves backwards and forwards like a huge, squirming ball.

The motor stopped working again. A German non-commissioned officer alighted and came forward—a tall, heavy treading man, wrapped in a long military great-coat, and a peaked cap on his head, with the peak pushed down. The light of the automobile lamp showed one half of his face, with a big blonde moustache, and a cigar in the mouth. His cheek was like copper. Achmed had an idea that he was not a human being at all, but a huge copper figure.

The German took the halter from Achmed and looked round. The road ran downwards with a big dip. On the right rose a huge wall of rock. It was impossible to get by that way. At the other side lay a valley crowned with a wood of olive trees. Here the German found a place where he could take the camels.

“Kom'mal, Bestie!”

As soon as the motor had stopped working, the camels had again become docile. The German led them down into the valley, and held them there until the heavy lorry had lumbered by. “Ruhig! Ruhig!” he whispered to the trembling beasts.

When they were back on the road, and the German had gone, the lad laughed and said, half in hatred, half admiringly:

“Almani . . . Eh?”

Achmed continued on foot. The affair had shaken him up. He was afraid lest he should fall asleep again, and another devil-car should crunch over him. He would rather walk till he came to Bab-Il-Wad.

Walking behind his camels, and holding to the tail of the hindmost, as is the custom, Achmed thought sadly of the café at Bab-Il-Wad.

At one time, before the war, it was a Chan—a real café. One met all sorts of people there, friends and strangers. One heard the news, and drank a glass of coffee, warm coffee—it was delightful. One never wanted to go away.

True, he never spent any money himself in drinking coffee. He was never such a fool as to give Sayd, the swindler, a chance to take two metaliks gold for a glass of mud. Except when the Jew, Leiser of Rehoboth, was with him, and paid for him . . . And now—how things have changed ! Sayd is no longer there ; no one is there. Only soldiers who leer at the passers-by like cats at a mouse. It is not safe to pass. They might seize his camels, or even himself !

He suddenly remembered something, and fumbled in his belt. Here lay the two silver medjidies which Leiser of Rehoboth had given him for delivering the oranges to his partner at Jerusalem. Achmed laughed delightedly.

At Jerusalem, too, he might have got something to carry back to the village, and then he would have had four medjidies to take home. Four medjidies—each medjidie eight bishliks—that means eight . . . sixteen . . . thirty-two bishliks. While as it is, he has only four medjidies, which is sixteen bishliks . . . Pity !

Yet he earns more than all the rest of the villagers. They are afraid to ■ to the town, especially to Jerusalem. They are all deserters. The Government gives them coats and trousers, and then they run back home, and stop there. That is what they all do. He, however, had no such luck. He was caught three times. He got no clothes either—only beatings. Everyone knows that it was unjust. His beard is already grey. He is sixty years of age, and maybe more than sixty. And they came and told him that according to their books, he is only forty !

Forty years of age ! Why, his son, the gendarme, is fifty !

Of course, that is a little exaggerated. Mustapha is not yet fifty, by a long way. But what is the difference ? His beard is grey. Everyone can see that. And before the railway from Jerusalem to Jaffa was laid, he was already the father of a family.

The first time they caught him, they sent him to Jaffa. But he did not stop there long. As soon as there was a chance, he ran away. He lived peacefully in his village. When Government horsemen were sighted he ran with the young men and hid. It was always easy to escape. Except at harvest time. Then it was difficult. Everyone was working at top-speed—there was no time to look round. And then suddenly the horsemen were on them. They surrounded the fields, so that none could escape, and they took away all the men, except the very aged.

He too, was dragged away, with his hands tied, and he was beaten with a whip across his shoulders and on his back. They were driven a whole hour's journey from the village. At last they stopped in the shadow of a huge tree, and it was arranged that the captives should be freed at a price of three bishliks per head. Achmed, too, paid three bishliks.

He regretted the three bishliks as if he had just lost them. He cursed those horsemen who had captured him last year. He was beside himself with anger. They had taken his three bishliks ! . . . And they had been wasted. For he was caught again, and sent to Jaffa. This time he suffered terribly. From Jaffa he was sent by train to Jerusalem. On the way, near Der-Aban, his fellow-villagers jumped from the train. He remained behind. He was too old for such tricks.

In Jerusalem, however, he was fortunate. The officer with spiky grey moustache, before whom he was brought, together with the rest of the captives, screamed angrily as soon as he saw him.

"What do you want here, you old dog !" he shouted.

Achmed wanted to say something, to explain, to defend himself. The officer refused to listen. He hit him twice, and dragged him by the beard out of the row in which he was standing, and shoved him into the street. Achmed felt that he ought not to have gone away. He ought to have fallen to his knees, and begged the officer to give him a certificate so that he should not be troubled again. But he was afraid of him. He was in such a rage, this evil-tempered officer with the spiky grey moustaches and flaming angry eyes.

It was even worse the next time he was caught. He was again taken to Jaffa. He argued that he had already been discharged in Jerusalem. But they laughed at him. They asked him to show them his discharge certificate. This time his son, Mustapha, stepped in. He swore that he would not rest until he had got a discharge for his father. It cost a lot of money. It cost two and a half liras in gold to get his age put right on the passport . . . Two and a half golden liras . . . Hey! Hey!

| Allah Ydjasihoou ! May God punish them ! . . .

Lower and lower ran the Wadi Ali, Imam Ali's valley, through which the highroad between Jaffa and Jerusalem has passed for ages. The heavens grew every minute more light. They were swept by ever-changing metallic shades—steel-blue, dull lead,

sparkling quicksilver and red gold, the shades which sweep away the dark colours of the night, and rouse the world to receive the white day. Behind them was the glowing face of the sun.

Achmed still held to the tail of the hind camel, and trotted on in step with it. Together with the vanishing of the night, went the bitterness of his memories. They paled, and moved back into the recesses of his mind. In their place came happier thoughts. He thought of the successful journey to Jerusalem which had brought him two white silver medjidies. No one had stopped him on the way. His fellow-villagers had warned him not to go. They had said that his camels would be requisitioned. Vain fear! Folk prophesy evil out of envy. One must earn something. He was not the only one who was risking things. And Leiser pays in coin, not in paper . . . And this is his third journey, and there has been no mishap.

Once he had been stopped by a horseman, but he had shown him his vissika, the police-certificate which had cost two and a half golden liras, and had said "Look!" and the horseman had said no more. True, he had asked for tobacco, but he had got out of that too. He had said that he did not smoke.

Nothing else had occurred on the road, except that the camels could not yet accustom themselves to the devilish trombil—the foolish beasts! . . . especially at night.

He himself had felt afraid only in the big city—in Jerusalem. He had trembled at the sight of a uniform. He had not feared for himself. What could they do to him? His papers were all in order. He had feared for his camels. What if someone in uniform had come up to him in the street, and said: "Hey-you fellah! Hand over those camels! The Government wants them!" What could he have done?—In the midst of the city, with soldiers everywhere. They would simply take his camels by force, and he would not even know who had taken them, nor where they were. And everywhere he went he met uniforms. Not before he had left the city behind him did his assurance return.

He was still doubtful about Bab-Il-Wad—some evil might yet happen to him there. Perhaps it would be best to avoid it. There is a by-path to the right, between the hills. It would take another hour. Only he had already passed it. It was not worth while to return. Never mind, everything would be right. Allah Karim! God is merciful!

The road turned to the right. The narrow mountain walls moved aside, and the road lay in front of him, broad and sunny. Achmed felt more at home here. He breathed more freely under the open sky, that smilingly kissed the golden fields. He had been born and bred in the valley, near the sea. On the one side a splendour of sands and grasses, on the other an even greater splendour—the sea. He was accustomed to be free, not confined and hemmed in. And he was not free in the narrow valleys on the road to Jerusalem. He did not like the Jerusalem district. Beneath him, quite near, suddenly appeared the frowning stone cafe of Bab-Il-Wad, the gate of the valley.

As he came near the place, he began to regret that he had not taken the by-road. He decided not to stop here at all. What business had he with soldiers?

He followed his camels, softly urging them on: "Howah! Howah!"

He was afraid of being stopped. He did not even look round to his left, where once had been the café, and where now the soldiers were stationed. In this way he slowly passed the danger spot. He had already begun to breathe more freely when he suddenly heard a coarse voice behind him: "Hey, Old 'Un! I want you!"

He pretended not to hear and went on.

"Stop, you fellah!"

The camels stopped. A soldier was holding the leader by the bridle. Achmed wanted to throw himself at him, but another soldier blocked the way. An officer stood by, a big mulatto, with a pointed black moustache and a whip in his hand. Behind him three more soldiers stood ready. Looking into the wide staring yellowy whites of the officer's eyes, Achmed suddenly realised that all was lost. His dirty bronzed face, with its deeply carved lines made by sun and rain, suddenly went dead grey. Soon, however, a brownish red flooded his cheeks. The blood rushed to his head. He beat with his fists at his naked shaggy breast, and cried in a curiously hoarse aged voice: "Yah Effendi! Don't take them from me! . . . They are my only means of livelihood . . . I have no more than these two. See, I am old . . . I am a Moslem——"

The officer smiled and showed his white teeth. Achmed fell at his feet.

"Yah Bek! Have pity! . . . God will reward you . . . By your life! . . . By the life of God and the Prophet! . . . Yah Bek!—"

He moved forward, and kissed the heavy tip of the officer's right boot. The officer was angry. "Away, fellah!" he shouted. "It is for the Government. Djamal Pasha is buying your camels. Take away the camels!" he added, turning to the soldier who was holding the leading camel by the bridle. Achmed caught at the officer's boot and wept: "Oh, my camels! . . . My two big beautiful camels! . . . They are the light of my eyes . . . Yah Bek! Have pity!—"

The officer tore his boot out of Achmed's grip. Achmed caught at it again. An evil light lit up in the officer's eye. He jerked his foot, so that the tip of the boot hit Achmed in the teeth. Blood rushed from his mouth. The officer stepped back and stood still, looking down at the bleeding fellah, who was squirming on the ground and toyed with his whip, waiting. Perhaps it would be necessary to give him another kick.

Achmed stood up. He no longer looked at the officer. He saw his camels in the hands of a stranger; they were being led away. Crying aloud, he went running after them, and grabbed with both hands at the bridle of the leading camel. The soldier beat him unmercifully and tore the bridle from him. The camel stretched its long neck now towards one, now towards the other of the two combatants, according to their movements as they struggled. It looked at them with tiny frightened eyes. At last it became vicious. It seemed as if at any moment it might bite one of the two with its terrible teeth. Achmed no longer knew what he was doing. His face was red with rage, his eyes were flaming, his ancient worn-out fez with its dirty yellow border fell from his head. A blood-flecked foam came from his lips. His beard too was dyed with the blood which came from his mouth. He swayed and yelled under the blows of the infuriated soldier, but he would not let go the bridle of his camel. A heavy kick in his side sent Achmed reeling to the ground. For a while he lay there breathless, holding both hands to the injured spot. It was paining him terribly, and he squirmed like a worm that had been trodden on. Standing over him was the black officer, with his wide yellowy eyes, and Achmed knew that he had given him the blow.

"Take away the camels!" the officer said to the soldiers.

Forgetting all his pain, Achmed dragged himself after the camels and caught the leader by the foot. The soldiers pulled him away.

An hour later Achmed was again on his way. He was seated on the smaller camel.

After much pleading and crying, the officer had agreed to let him have the smaller camel. "It is not worth taking," he had said. In his hand, Achmed was holding a cloth in which lay some peetas, white Arab cakes, which he had taken with him from home, to avoid spending money on food. In the cloth, among the cakes, lay fifteen paper liras, which he had been given for his big, strong, beautiful camel.

What was the use of these paper notes? No one would accept them. How he had pleaded with the officer: "Yah Bek! Take the smaller camel, and let me have the big one . . . It is all the same to you . . ." But the officer had been obstinate and would take only the bigger camel. Then he had pleaded that he should pay him in coin. But the officer had just tossed him the paper notes, the cursed nigger, and had beaten Achmed again when he had said that he wanted gold, not paper.

His heart hurt so much that Achmed forgot his physical pain. He beat the camel with his feet as he rode, beat him and cried: "Unhappy beast! . . . They did not want to take you. They have taken the good camel, the beautiful camel! . . . The villains! . . . They did not take you, you carcase . . . you good for nothing——!"

The sun moved higher up in the heavens. The heat became oppressive. Achmed felt unwell. It was as if he were lying ill in bed. His head was reeling as if he had fever. There was a bitter taste in his mouth, and a thirst plagued him since he had left Babil-Wad. It was still an hour or two before noon when he stopped by a road-side well. Bathing his wounded face with cool water, he felt how his teeth were paining, and that his lower lip was swelling. Even worse was the pain in his side, where the black slave of an officer had kicked him with his heavy boot.

Achmed drank and gave his camel to drink. He could not eat. The pain in his mouth was too great. And besides he did not want to eat. Behind the well stood several ancient fig-trees, casting a heavy shade all round. To one of these he tied his camel, and laid down beside him. The cloth which held the peetas, he

hung on a branch above his head. Presently he fell asleep, groaning.

He was awakened by a sudden movement among the branches of the fig-tree. Several leaves fell on his face. He jumped up with the thought that he was being robbed. The sight, however, which met his eyes stunned him. He stood there as if paralysed. Over his head, among the branches, swayed the long, anky neck of the little camel, and in its mouth was one of the ends of the cloth in which he had hidden the fifteen paper liras among the peetas. The whole thing lasted a second. The camel tugged at the cloth—and swallowed it and all it contained.

Fellaheen who came to the well a little after, heard Achmed cursing, and saw him beating the camel.

"What has happened?" they asked him.

Achmed held his hand to his side, which pained him and moaned indistinctly, mumbling through his swollen under-lip.

"Two camels I possessed," he related—"This Nidjis, this good for nothing, and a good camel, beautiful as a young bride, gentle as a city child and huge as a mountain. He lifted one hundred and fifty rotel of goods like a feather . . . He carried two hundred rotel easily . . . He was tall as the Djamiah-El-Abiad, the white tower of Ramleh . . . And this small camel has eaten him up . . . The small camel has eaten the big camel——"

Achmed repeated this for a whole hour. When the fellaheen grasped what he was telling them, they laughed at him. And the more he spoke, the more they laughed at him. They had not heard such a merry tale for a long time.

## THE IMMORTAL ORANGE

By ZALMAN SCHNEUER

*Translated by HANNAH BERMAN*

Zalman Schneuer, born 1887, in Shklov, White Russia, in a Hassidic family, lineal descendant of Rabbi Schneuer Zalman Schneuer, the founder of Habad Hassidism. Began writing poems, stories and plays at the age of nine. Went to Odessa when he was thirteen. Started publishing in 1902, and speedily won recognition as one of the two or three most important Hebrew poets of the day. Wrote also many Hebrew novels. Afterwards took to writing Yiddish, and is now a very important figure in Yiddish literature. A voluminous writer both in Hebrew and Yiddish.

### I

Two boxes of oranges going across the blue ocean. The oranges are Algerian, globular, juicy, heavy, with a glowing red peel—the colour of African dawns.

The oranges in the first box boast : “ We are going to Warsaw, the ancient Polish capital. Oh, what white teeth will bite into us, what fine aristocratic tongues will relish us ! ”

The oranges in the second box keep silent ; snuggle one against the other, and blush for shame. They know—thanks be to God—that their destination is a little village somewhere in Lithuania, and God knows into what beggarly hands they will fall. No, it was not worth drinking in so thirstily the warmth of the African sun, the cool dews of the Algerian nights, the perfumes of the blossoming French orange groves. Nimble brown hands of young mulatto girls cut them down off the trees, and flung them into bamboo baskets. Was it worth while ?

But we shall see who came off best : the oranges that went to Warsaw, or those that arrived later at Shklov—a remote village in Lithuania. And we shall draw the moral.

So the first lot of oranges arrived at Warsaw and the fruit merchant set them out in pyramids. They glowed like balls of fire out of the window. But that did not last long. They were sold the same day. The tumultuous, thirsty street soon swallowed

them up. Tired folks thrust them into their pockets, pulled off their juicy, golden peel with dirty fingers, and flung it on the slush-covered pavements. They swallowed the oranges as they walked along, like dogs, without saying grace. The refreshing juice bespattered dusty beards, greasy coats. Their place in the shop ■ already taken by other fruits and even vegetables. No feeling for birth and breeding! Only bits of their beautiful peel still lay about in the streets, like the cold rays of a far-off, glowing sun. But no one understood that these were greetings from distant sunny lands, from eternally-blue skies. They were trampled underfoot, horses stamped on them, and the street sweeper came with his broom, and swept them, ruthlessly, into the rubbish box. That was the end of the oranges! The end of something that had flourished somewhere, and drawn sustenance between perfumed leaves, and fell into bamboo baskets under a hot, luxuriant sky.

The second box of oranges arrived a few days later at Shklov. They were dragged along in little peasant wagons, and jolted in Jewish carts, until they had the honour of being shown into their new surroundings.

The wife of the spice-merchant of Shklov called over her husband :

"Come on, my smart fellow. Open the oranges for the *Purim* presents."

Eli, the spice-merchant, despite his wife's sarcasm, was an expert at unpacking. He worked at the box of oranges for a couple of hours. Patiently, carefully he worked around the lid with his chisel, like a goldsmith at a precious case of jewels. His wife stood beside him, giving advice. At last the box was opened, and out of the bits of blue tissue paper gleamed the little cheeks of the oranges, and there was a burst of heavy, festive fragrance.

In a little while, the oranges lay set out in the little shop window, peeping out on the muddy market-place, the grey, lowering sky, the little heaps of snow in the gutters, the fur-clad, White Russian peasants in their yellow-patched, sheepskin jerkins. Everything around them was so strange, northern, chilly, half-decayed. And the oranges with their festive perfume, and their bright colour were so rich and strange and new in such an unfamiliar, poor *milieu*, like a royal garment in a beggar's tavern. . . .

Aunt Feiga arrives with her woollen shawl about her head, and a basket in her hand. She sees the freshly-unpacked fruit, and goes in to buy. *Purim* gifts. And here begins the *immortality* of the orange !

Poor and grey is Lithuanian life. And the little natural wealth that sometimes falls into this place is used up a little at a time, reasonably, and with all the five senses. Not a drop goes to waste of the beautiful fruit that has strayed in here. No, if the orange had been no more than the wandering spirit of a sinful soul it would have found salvation at the home of Aunt Feiga.

## II

"Then you won't take eight *hopeks* either ? Good day !"

The spice-merchant's wife knows full well that Aunt Feiga has no other place where she can buy ; yet she pulls her back by the shawl :

"May all Jews have a pleasant *Purim* as surely as I am selling you golden fruit . . . I only want to make a start."

"We only want to make a start !" repeats Eli, the spice-merchant, the experienced opener of orange boxes.

A *rouble* more or a *rouble* less. Aunt Feiga selects the best, the heaviest orange, wraps it up, and drops it carefully into the basket, between eggs, onions, goodies for *Purim*, and ■ sorts. Aunt Feiga comes home, and the little ones clamour round her, from the eleven-year-old *Gemarrak* student to the littlest one who is just learning the alphabet, and who have all been given a holiday from school for the eve of *Purim*. They immediately start turning out their mother's basket.

"Mother, what have you brought ? What have you brought ?"

The mother silences them. One gets a smack in the face, because of the holiday ; another a thump ; and a third a tweak of the ear.

"What has happened here ! Look ■ the locusts swarming around me !"

Yet, she shows them what she has brought.

"There ! Look, you devils, scamps !"

Among the small town Lithuanian goodies, the orange glows like a harbinger of wealth and happiness. The children are taken aback. They still remember last *Purim*, a shadow of the

fragrance of such a fruit. Now it has come back to life with the same fragrance and roundness. Here it is ! They will not see the like of it again till this time next year.

They snatch at it with thin little hands ; they smell it ; they marvel at it.

" Oh, how delicious ! " cries the youngest child. " Oh, how it smells ! "

" It grows in Palestine," puts in the *Gemarrah* student, and somehow feels proud and grave.

Aunt Feiga locks it into the drawer. But the round, fragrant, flaming fruit lives in the imagination of the children, like a sweet dream. It shines rich and new among the hard green apples and pickled cucumbers that the children have been seeing all the winter.

When the *Purim* feast begins, the orange sits at the head of the table, among a host of little tarts and jellics, and figs and sweets, and shines like a huge coral bead in a multi-coloured mosaic.

Aunt Feiga covers it with a cloth, and gives it to the *Purim* gift-bearer to take away. The orange sticks the top of its head out of the cloth, as one might say : " Here I am. I am whole. A pleasant festival, children ! " The children follow him on his travels with longing eyes. They know that it will have to pass through many transmigrations, poor thing, until it is brought back to them by the beadle.

And so it was. One aunt exchanges the orange for a lemon, and sends it to another relative. And Aunt Feiga has the lemon. So she sends the lemon to another relative, and there it again meets the orange, and they exchange places. And Aunt Feiga gets her precious orange back again.

The cloth is removed. The orange, the cunning devil, sits in his former place, like the *King of Bagdad*, and rules over little cakes, and sweets and raisins. The cold of the *Purim* night lies on him like a dew. He seems to be smiling a little wearily, a little chilled after his long journeyings in so strange, snow-covered, and unfamiliar a night :

" You see, children, I've come back ! You needn't have been afraid."

### III

When *Purim* is over, the orange lies in the drawer, still whole, and feels happy. If relatives call, and sabbath dainties are served

up, the orange has first place on the table, like a prince among plebeian apples and walnuts. People turn him over, ask how much he cost, and give their opinion about him, like wealthy folk who are used ■ such fruits, and he is put back on his plate. The apples and the nuts disappear one by one, and the orange always escapes from the hands of the relatives, and remains whole. Relatives in Shklov are no gluttons—God forbid! They know what must be left for good manners.

"When the month of *Adar* comes we have jollifications . . ." About ten days after *Purim* there is a betrothal contract drawn up in Aunt Feiga's home. Aunt Feiga has betrothed her eldest daughter to a respectable young man. And again the orange lies on top, right under the hanging lamp, just as if he were the object of the whole party. True, one cheek is a bit withered by now, like that of an old general, but for all that, he still looks majestic. He lights up the table with his luxuriant, exotic strangeness. The youngsters, from the ABC boy to the eleven-year-old *Gemarrak* student, have already hinted repeatedly to their father and their mother that it is high time they had a taste of the orange. . . . Say the blessing for a new sort of fruit—that was all they wanted, only to say the blessing for a new sort of fruit. . . . But Aunt Feiga gave them a good scolding: "Idlers, gluttons! When the time comes to say the blessing over new fruit, we shall send a special messenger to notify you. . . . Your father and mother won't eat it up themselves. You needn't be afraid of that."

The youngsters were all atremble at the betrothal party lest the bridegroom should want to say the blessing for new fruit. Who can say what a bridegroom might want at his betrothal party. Mother always gives him the best portions.

But the bridegroom belongs to Shklov. He knows that an orange has not been made for a bridegroom to eat at his betrothal party, but only to decorate the table. So he holds it in his hand just for a minute, and his Adam's apple runs into his chin and runs out again. And the orange again is left intact.

But at last the longed-for Friday evening arrives. The orange is no longer so globular as it had been, nor so fragrant. His youth has gone. But it does not matter. It is still an orange. After the Sabbath meal the mood is exalted. No notification has been sent by special messenger; but the youngsters know instinctively that this time *the blessing over the new fruit will ■ said.*

But they pretend to know nothing. One might think there was no such thing as an orange in this world.

Said Aunt Feiga to Uncle Uri :

" Uri, share out the orange among the children. How long is it ■ lie here ? "

Uncle Uri, a bearded Jew with crooked eyes, an experienced orange-eater who has probably eaten half a dozen oranges, or more, in the course of his life, sat down at the head of the table, opened up the big blade of his pocket-knife—an old " wreck "—and started the operation. The children stand round the table watching their father with reverend awe, as one watches a rare magic-maker, though they would love to see the inside of the orange and taste it as well. They are only human beings, after all, with desires. . . . But Uncle Uri has lots of time. Carefully and calmly he cuts straight lines across the fruit, from " pole " to " pole." First he cuts four such lines, then eight, one exactly like the other. (You must admit that he is a master at that sort of thing !) And then he begins to peel the orange.

Everybody listens to the crackling of the fleshy, elastic peel. Slowly the geometrically-true pieces of red peel come off. But, here and there, the orange has become slightly wilted, and little bits of the juicy " flesh " come away with the peel. Uncle Uri says " Phut ! " just as if it hurt him, thrusts the blade of his knife into the orange, and operates on the danger spot. The orange rolls out of its yellowish-white, fragrant swaddling-clothes, and is artistically divided up by the Uncle into equal half-moons, piece by piece.

" Children," cries the newly-engaged girl, placing a big glass on the table, " don't forget the pips. Throw them in here. They will be soaked and planted . . . "

She addresses her little brothers, but she means her father as well.

The youngsters undertake to assist their sister in her house-keeping enthusiasm, which seems to hold out a promising prospect. And they turn their eyes on the tender, rosy half-moons on the plate.

The first blessing is the prerogative of Uncle Uri himself. He chews one bite, and swallows it with enthusiasm, closing one crooked eye, and lifting the other to the ceiling, and shaking his head :

"A tasty orange! Children, come over here . . ."

The youngest-born goes first. This ■ his privilege. Whenever there is anything nice going, he is always first after his father. He says the blessing at the top of his voice, with a little squeak, flings the half-moon into his mouth, and gulps it down.

"Don't gulp! . . ." says Uncle Uri very patiently. "No one is going to take it away from you."

"And where is the pip?" asks his betrothed sister, pushing forward the glass.

"Yes, that's right. Where is the pip?" Uncle Uri backs her up.

"Swallowed it . . ." says the youngster, frightened, and flushes to his ears.

"Swallowed it?"

"Ye-e-s."

And the tears come into the little one's eyes. He looks round at his older brothers. . . . They keep quiet.

But it is too late. . . . He knows. . . . No father can help him now. They will tease the life out of him. From this day on he has a new nickname: "Little pip."

Then the remaining portions of the orange are shared out in order, from the bottom upwards, till it comes ■ the turn of the *Gemarrah* student. He takes his portion, toys with it a while, and bites into it, feeling that it tastes nice, and also that it is a sweet greeting from Palestine, of which he has dreamed often at Chedar. Oranges surely grow only in Palestine. . . .

"And a blessing?" says Uncle Uri, catching him out, and fixing him with his crooked eyes.

"Blessed art Thou . . ." the *Gemarrah* student murmurs, abashed; and the bit of orange sticks in his throat. His greeting from Palestine has had all the joy taken out of it.

But Uncle Uri was not yet satisfied. No. He lectured the *Gemarrah* student to the effect that he might go and learn from his youngest brother how to say a blessing. Yes, he might take a lesson from him. He could assure him that he would one day light the stove for his youngest brother. Yes, that he would, light his stove for him. And . . .

But he suddenly remembered:

"Feiga, why don't you taste a bit of orange?"

It was a good thing that he remembered; otherwise, who knows when he would have finished his lecture.

"It doesn't matter," Aunt Feiga replied. Nevertheless, she came up, said the blessing, and enjoyed it: "Oh, oh, what lovely things there are in the world!" And then they started a discussion about oranges.

Aunt Feiga said that if she were rich, she would eat every day—half an orange. A whole orange was beyond her comprehension. How could anyone go and eat up a whole orange costing eight and a half *kopeks*?—But Uncle Uri did things on a bigger scale. He had after all been once to the Fair at Nijni-Novgorod. So he smiled out of his crooked eyes: No, if he were rich, he would have the juice squeezed out of—three oranges at once, and drink it out of a glass. There!

His wife and children were astounded at the richness of his imagination, and pictured to themselves a full glass of rosy, thick orange juice, with a white froth on top, and a pip floating about in the froth. . . .

They all sat round the table in silence for a while, gazing with dreamy eyes at the yellow moist pips which the betrothed girl had collected from all those who had a share of the orange. She poured water over them, and counted them through the glass, one, two, three, four. . . . She had nine in all. Yes. Next week she would plant them in the flower-pots; and after her wedding, she would take them with her to her own home. She would place them in her windows, and would let them grow under inverted glasses. . . .

You no doubt think that this is the end. Well, you have forgotten that an orange also has a peel. . . .

#### IV

One of the youngsters made a discovery—when you squeeze a bit of orange peel over against the lamp, a whole fountain of transparent, thin little fragrant drops squirts out, and when you squirt these into the eyes of one of your brothers, he starts to squint. . . . But before he had time to develop his discovery, he got a smack on his hand. And all the bits of peel vanished into Aunt Feiga's apron.

"There ■ no trick too small for them to play, the devils. Just as if it were potato-peelings. . . . If she could only get a little more, she could make preserves. . . . Yes, preserves. . . ."

But that was only talk. By the time she could collect enough orange peel to make preserves the Messiah would have come.

So she placed the peel overnight in the warm stove to dry. The golden-red bits of peel, that only yesterday had looked so fresh and juicy, were now wilted, blackish-brown, curled up and hard, like old parchment. Aunt Feiga took her sharp kitchen-knife, and cut the peel into long strips, then into small, oblonga. . . . She put them into a bottle, poured brandy on them, strewed them with soft sugar, and put it away to stand. The brandy revived the dried-up bits of orange peel, they swelled out, blossomed forth, took on again their one-time bloom. You pour out a tiny glassful, sip it, and taste the genuine flavour and bouquet of orange peel.

Relatives come to pay you a visit, they pronounce a blessing, take a sip, and feel refreshed, and it is agreed unanimously that it is very good for the stomach. And the women question Aunt Feiga how she came to think of such a clever thing. . . .

"Look," said Uncle Zhama to Michla his wife, "you let everything go to waste. Surely you had an orange as well for *Purim*! Where is the peel? Nothing. Thrown it away."

Uncle Uri interrupts him :

"Don't worry, Zhama, let us have another sip."

And he smiles out of his crooked eyes at his "virtuous woman," Aunt Feiga.

The bottle is tied up again with a piece of white cloth about the cork, so that it should not evaporate. And it is put away in the cupboard so that it should draw for a long time. And the bottle stands there, all alone, like a pious woman, a deserted wife, in a hood. . . .

Passover comes, and Jews go through the formality of selling their leaven to Alexieka the water-carrier, with the dirty, flaxen hair; so the bottle of orange-brandy-water too falls into Gentile hands. All that week it stands there, sold, a forbidden thing, and scarcely lives to see the day when it is once more redeemed, so that Jews with grey beards and Jewish women in pious wigs should pronounce the blessing over it, and tell each other about Aunt Feiga's amazing capacity.

Sometimes a bottle like that stands for years. From time to time you add fresh brandy, and it is tasted very rarely, until the bits of orange peel at the bottom of the bottle begin to lose their

strength, become sodden and pale. Then Uncle Uri knocks them out on a plate.

This ■ always done on a Saturday night, after the blessing at the termination of the Sabbath, when the spirit of exaltation has vanished, and the week-day drabness creeps out of every little corner. Then Uncle Uri looks for something of a pick-me-up, and remembers the faded, brandy-soaked, sugared bits of orange peel.

He turns the wide, respectable bottle bottom up—begging your pardon, and smacks it firmly but gently on the bottom.

“Phut, phut, phu-ut . . .” the bottle resounds complainingly, penetrating with hollow dulness all over the room, into the week-day, post-Sabbath shadows.

There is a sound, like a deep, frightened sigh, an echo from a dried-up ancient well. The bottle seems to cry aloud, that the soul is being knocked out of it, its last breath. . . . And at the same time, sticky, golden-yellow, appetising bits of peel fall out of the neck.

Then all is silent. Uncle Uri pronounces the blessing over the leavings, tastes, and then hands them round.

The children agree that though they are a little harsh, one still detects the taste of the one-time, *Purim* orange, peace unto it.

But at the very moment that the last vestige of the famous orange is disappearing from Uncle Uri's house, the heirs of the orange—the sodden, swollen-up little pips—have long since shot up in the flower pots at the home of Uncle Uri's married daughter. Three or four spiky, sticky little leaves have sprouted out from each little pip.

The overturned, perspiring glasses were removed long ago. They are getting accustomed quite nicely to the climate of Shklov, and are sprouting slowly, with the reserved, green little smile that they had brought with them and secreted within themselves.

The young wife looks after them, waters them daily. And *God knows what may grow out of them one day.*

## SABBATHAI

By S. J. AGNON

*Translated by I. M. LASK*

Samuel Joseph Agnon, born at Buczacz, Galicia, in 1888. In Palestine 1907-1913; in Germany 1913-1924, since when he has been in Palestine. His collected works (four volumes) were published in 1932.

Agnon is already a classic of his kind. In contradistinction to almost all contemporary Hebrew writers, who deal with modern themes, his most successful work describes Jewish life in the Poland of the late eighteenth century before the coming of the period of "Enlightenment." His is a Jewry still four-square with itself, whose memory goes back to the days of Jewish autonomy under the "Council of the Four Lands." The two first volumes of his works contain a sort of Ashkenazic Jewish Arabian Nights with a multitude of tales strung with jewels on the thread of the main story, "The Bridal Canopy," and tell the misadventures of a Jewish Don Quixote, Reb Yudel, who goes out to perform that most meritorious of all commandments, the raising of dowries to bring his daughters under the bridal canopy. In this story the full inner wealth of old Jewish orthodoxy is laid bare; if nothing else, Agnon is a reaction to a century of rationalism.

Agnon's style is modelled on the Hebrew chapbooks of the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, and is far richer and quainter than appears on the surface.

THE details of the affair are not too clear, but in the main the facts, are that there was a fellow in our town, Israel Coppersmith by name, who was a real master of his craft and used to make things in copper and brass, kettles and basins and ewers and Hanuka candlesticks and Sabbath candlesticks, tiny lamps and great lamps for hanging in the synagogues and houses of study and in the houses of decent folk, as well as lamps with holes and pipes for wicks. Some of them would be made like lions and some like eagles and some like deer and some like buds and blossoms and all the other shapes that give the eye pleasure and are bright as the moon and the stars on Sabbath eves when they light up the eyes of Jews at prayer. And while he was working he would think to

himself about the secret comforts and salvations that stand and wait in the World to Come for those who keep the Sabbath, till his innards were filled with song and he would break into Sabbath lays and the pleasant prayers of the Sabbath, while the hammer answered him back, and he would raise his voice for joy that the Holy and Blest One should have given us so great and hallowed a day.

His wife would say, what are you so happy for? And Israel would answer, the Sabbath day has just come to my mind so I feel joyful; for consider the virtues of the Sabbath when a body lights the Sabbath candles and they shine bright for him in two worlds. Sure a man prepares himself a fine portion for the Sabbath; it supplies him all his needs, and besides, he who keeps the Sabbath in this world has his body preserved in the next world and is safe from every kind of mishap. And he used to grieve that his poverty kept him from honouring the Sabbath as is meet, since for all his toil he saw no decent recompense in this world, and when the Sabbath eve came round he had never a doit to buy anything with. And his candlesticks stood without candles and his pots stood without flesh or fish or any Sabbath dish, and his wife would be grieving and saying, Woe's me that we have nothing at all for the Sabbath.

And seeing he did not wish to turn his Sabbath into a week-day he would go where he had to and take seven bits of copper and beat them out and sink a die into them and turn them into seven coins like the Government makes. The Emperor, long life to him, Israel used to say, is a rich enough man and has a good heart towards the Jews and could never be annoyed at me making myself a couple of coins. One he would make for candles and one for raisins to be boiled into wine for kiddush and one for Sabbath loaves and one for flesh and one for fish and one for dessert and one for pudding and pie, and would give them to his wife to buy Sabbath ware. Nor was there anybody could distinguish between his coins and those the Emperor strikes. Maybe the Emperor might be able to tell which were his coins and which were the smith's, but the Emperor lives in Vienna while Israel lived in our town and from our town to Vienna lies a stretch of five hundred leagues and more.

Me and you being decent folk never went and said anything about him to the Emperor, but there were others went and told the Emperor, Israel Coppersmith is striking coins. So the

Emperor sends to Israel Coppersmith, and that day was Sabbath eve when his wife was just about to leave for the market to buy Sabbath ware. Before she could even start out a man sent by the Emperor came and took his coins and put them in the Royal treasury to test them and tied Israel's both hands behind him and put him in iron chains and led him off to prison. The hands that had been used to prepare fine vessels were chafed by iron chains and the mouth that had been filled with sweet song was dumb for suffering.

And Israel's wife sat moaning and eating her heart out for her husband in prison and she had no candles for the Sabbath, no wine for kiddush, nor Sabbath loaves, nor flesh and fish, nor anyone to weep in front of for lack of the wherewithal to usher in the Sabbath. Everybody who knows how a woman slaves only in order to greet the Sabbath can suffer her sufferings when she stood with never a doit and her husband in iron chains being led off to a distant city and no telling when he would come back to her. She stood and raised both her hands aloft and said, Lord of the Universe, was it for our own profit that we did what we did? Wasn't it for Your Sacred Name's sake we did it, because You ordered us to honour the Sabbath, and now because we have done what you commanded I must sit forlorn in my house while my husband sits forlorn in prison.

And who can tell how long the unhappy woman might have sat grieving if an old man hadn't come along just then and knocked at the door and asked, Does the wife of Israel Coppersmith live here? She opened the door and, in front of her, she saw a fine man of good appearance who looked like a king, and stood a head taller than all other men, with his bright eyes as all seven days of the week and his white beard dropping down to his middle and his voice like a man reciting the Torah and his words sweeter than honey. He sets seven coins down before her and says, Your husband has sent you money for Sabbath, so as you can get candles and wine and Sabbath loaves and flesh and fish for yourself.

And before ever she could ask him where he had seen her husband the old man had vanished. So she wipes her eyes and puts her kerchief round her head and goes off to the market and buys all her Sabbath ware and arranges her table with candles and wine and food and drink.

And that wasn't the only time, for every Sabbath eve while Israel was still kept in prison the same old man would come and set down seven copper coins in front of her and say, Your husband lets you have money so as you can prepare Sabbath. And before she had a chance to ask questions he would be gone.

We don't know how long Israel was kept. When the Government lays a hand on anyone it doesn't let go of him so quick. But His Blessed Name saw the sufferings of Israel and took pity on him and loosened his chains and brought him out of prison, and more still, He brought him back to his hearth and his wife, and more still, they couldn't bring his case to court because the coins the soldierman had took from him were all vanished out of the Royal treasury and not even one single one was left. And once they were all gone nobody could come and test them and pass a judgment against him.

So Israel left the prison and came back to his hearth and his wife. They were both mighty glad and offered praise and thanksgiving to the Holy and Blest One who frees the prisoned, and made a great holiday and told one another about everything that had happened to them since the arm of the soldierman had come between them.

While they were busy speaking, Israel asks his wife, How did you keep going all this while? And she answered him, All the week through I licked the dust, but on the Sabbath my table was arranged and my candle burnt and I lacked for nothing. He asks her, How did you do it? Says she to him, Didn't you send me money every Sabbath eve so as I should get me Sabbath fare? He says to her, I don't know what you're talking about. Says she, You're a fine one for joking, Israel, why you yourself used to send me money. He stands and stares at her all wondering and says, I sent you money? She tells him, every Sabbath Eve an old man used to come and say, Israel lets you have for Sabbath needs. Then Israel says to her, I don't know nothing about the whole thing. And she answers him: If you don't know [nothing about it who does know?

Israel takes the business to heart and says, I don't know who the old man was and no more do you. Then it could only have been Elijah, the prophet of blessed memory. And perhaps it was him too as took my coins out of the Royal treasury so as the Emperor shouldn't find out I made the coins. But Israel's wife says to

him, Don't say it was Elijah, because I distinctly heard him say, My name is Sabbathai.

And we also believe the same as that woman, that the old man wasn't Elijah, because we find in ever so many places in the Talmud how it is assured us Jews that Elijah don't come on Sabbath eves and so on. But on our own we hold that this was Holy Sabbath himself, who said for love of truth, Sabbathai is my name ; and ■ was out of God's love for the Jews and His wish that they shouldn't have to turn their Sabbaths into week-days that He sent the Holy Sabbath himself to her.

# THE THREE HALUTZOT

By AVIGDOR HAMEIRI

*Translated by I. M. LASK*

Avigdor Hameiri, born in Hungary in 1890. Fought in the War, was taken prisoner by the Russians, was in Odessa during the revolution, left for Constantinople in 1921 and arrived in Palestine not long after.

A journalist, poet and prose writer of considerable merits. His lyric poetry of great warmth and urgency; and some of his War poems are as good as anything published in any language. His prose includes a War book, "The Great Lunacy"; an account of his experiences as a prisoner of war, "The Nether Hell"; a volume of sketches of Odessan life in 1920-21, "Between Men's Teeth," which is almost unequalled for sheer naked photographic power; and a large number of War and other stories. It is his desire to display Freud, as one might say, underlying Marx—the passions let loose by social and economic upheavals.

The following story, "The Three Halutzot," was specially translated at the author's request. It has already been published in German, French, Hungarian, Yiddish, Polish, Serbian, Rumanian, Czech, and Spanish.

## I

### "Murderess"

My friend the sculptor took me by the arm and said:

"Come on; you've got to come and see something that has been driving me crazy lately. You must come and see a woman's body."

"I've seen them. More than once. I used to drop in at Franz Stuk's studio. I've seen them."

"You've seen devils, my boy, not women's bodies. That Stuk of yours paints devils and witches. Come along and I'll show you a real angel of the Lord, a real fairy."

Well and good. We went down to the seashore.

It was sunset. A Jaffa sunset with all its futurist magic. The sea was flaming, poured-out molten gold; and the disc of the sun descended to the sea like a woman smiling as she goes down to her scented bath.

The foreshore was filled with bathers, old and young together.

They were bathing, splashing and skylarking, like dragonflies round forest pools.

My friend the sculptor paced hither and thither, staring and searching, reassuring me with the hand held behind him : " Right away, right away. She's here every day, she bathes here. I'll find her at once."

I followed him.

But I found her before he did. I noticed a group of women lying on the sand with all their eyes frozen on one spot in the sea. The spot was she.

" There she is," I told my friend.

" Aha. Yes."

" Well ? "

" My old teacher Rodin," said my friend excitedly, " once said to me categorically, ' Never model a woman's body till you find one that robs you of your rest and brings you to the belief that even if you were shown no more than one breast you would be able to say exactly how old she is.'"

" Well, there she is. For the last few days I can't eat or drink or sleep like an ordinary human being. You know how I always eat like a brewer's horse and sleep like a dormouse. Now I eat like a dormouse and sleep like a horse—I hardly close my eyes."

I gazed at her while he added : " That's her public, that group of curious women. They talk of her as the young beauty. They know she comes to bathe here every day at this time and they come to stare at her and feel sorry for themselves."

" Yes. She's a beauty. Who is she ? "

" Who is she ? I'll tell you the truth ; I want to go round and ask, but I'm afraid of the answer. Why ? Just look at her.—Now tell me, can you estimate how long it took for that woman's body to evolve out of hairy ape-mother Eve ? How many millions of years have gone by to bring the body to this stage ? And who and what has brought it as far as this ? "

" Who ? I suppose that quiet, petted, sheltered lives of gentle culture and of careful, prolonged nurture have been the lot of mother and daughter for ages and ages. Care of the entire body from her hair to her toenails."

" That's it. And that's what strikes a discord in my creative enthusiasm. A girl nurtured enough to make the working masses rise ! Someone told me that she's a halutz. I believed

him for a moment and then realised how far I was from acting on my teacher's instructions. How could I imagine even for a second that she was a halutza? When you look at our worn-out halutzot, tired out and withered up before their time with hard work, you'll go raving mad at that girl; her beauty flourishes at the cost of all holy and unfortunate daughters of Israel, who can't even afford to buy a cake of decent toilet soap."

"That's no affair of an artist."

"I know, but what can I do? I know it's the sort of philosophising you can expect from a Socialist. But it's gone so far that instead of modelling the body of a beautiful woman I've decided to introduce an idea of cruelty. I'd hardly begun to model when the right name struck me for the piece—*Cattleia Necans*. Do you know the *Cattleia Necans* Orchid, the loveliest of them all? It's a wonderful flower, a destructive flower, climbing over plants and trees and pouring its tendrils over any number of other plants; it twines round them, embraces them and slays them with a kiss, sucks their sap and flourishes, its blossom laughing to the sun in all its colours and its scent making you drunk far away.—And this witch here is a blossom of the same kind. She preens herself at the cost of thousands of her sisters who toil and dry up like wild roses and who shrivel up under the flaming sun. *Cattleia Necans*—murderess!"

I wanted to say something to him, something in the style of Samson's "Out of the strong came forth sweetness." But she had just come out of the sea alone.

The sun was sinking, a disc of pure gold, and the girl stood stretching herself. She made a step and her head entered the circle of flaming light. The rim of the sun was a diadem set round her black head.

"Just look how Chance is mocking us. A glory of gold round her head. Come along, let's go. That's enough."

As we walked along he repeated:

"Murderess . . . murderess."

## II

### *Mother*

I met the sculptor again and he was in quite a different mood. He had a new idea. His murderess had been dropped halfway.

He was true to his social theories and did not care even for the sanctities of Art, if they did not agree with his theories. He hated that murderess and a hater cannot be a creator. Now he had a holy idea.

"I've an idea for something I've long felt the need of."

"Well?"

"The Jewish Mother. It's like this. Next door to me live a couple with two kiddies, a boy and a girl. The boy's sick lately. The wall's real Tel Aviv manufacture, thick as three sheets of writing paper, and I can hear everything that's going on. And among the rest I've found out something that never struck me. I've found out what a Jewish mother is.—It's something I can't make out. This mother hasn't slept a wink for nearly three months—not a wink. I work at night, as you know, and she's up and busy with the baby all night long. She doesn't close her eyes even for five minutes. She just doesn't sleep. How is it possible?"

"Maybe she sleeps in the daytime?"

"That's the thing! I know that in the daytime she's at work somewhere. I haven't even seen her yet. Once I got up in the morning because I hadn't been working the night before, and I heard her attending to the two children. She was suckling the little boy and singing to him, and teaching the little girl. Pure Hebrew instruction. She speaks a Hebrew we can envy her. Lately there's nobody there all day long; it's only in the morning I hear her while she's suckling the boy. I hear things that are enough to make you melt away. She suckles the baby and speaks to him in her song. I noted down some of it."

He took out his notebook and read:

"Little red flower, tiny blossom, here is a little milk, take my pure white life. Take my white blood. Drink, drink, my weeny ram, drink and become a lion. Judah is a lion's whelp. Judah-lion's-whelp must not be sick. Many are the beasts of prey, my little son. You must grow and roar, not for prey my son, but for the word of the Lord. A lion roars, who doth not fear; the Lord doth speak, who can but prophesy? Drink, drink my son, my milk and blood. La-la-la, la-la-la, la-la."

He closed his notebook and raised his eyes to me. His eyes were moist.

"Well, what do you think?"

"A Jewish mother. You're right."

"She's awake at night. Doesn't let her eyelids close. And by day it's Judah the lion's whelp and then to work somewhere or other. Sure, she's a halutz. 'Take my white blood'—Lord! We have mothers like that."

"And who's her husband?"

"I have no idea. I'll tell you the truth; I've no great desire as yet to meet her. Come along to my place!"

As we entered his room we heard the voice of a woman singing to herself.

"She's at home," whispered the sculptor.

After listening a moment:

"She's washing herself—she's about to go out. Do you know what? Let's go down to the entrance and wait for her."

We went down and stood in the entrance hall, and did not have long to wait. She appeared and went into the street. We could not see her face well for it was hidden by a blue summer-veil. She passed us quickly, a tastefully-dressed young woman. I looked after her and saw that her hands were not well kept.

"Spoiled hands," I said. "They're hard and bony. A halutz."

"A pity," said my friend. "Those are holy hands."

He looked after her and was silent. Suddenly he roused himself.

"Eh, my lad! What a piece, what a creation that will be! Do you know the name I've found for it?"

"Well?"

"Thy mother, the lioness."

### III

#### *Halutz*

"You're looking for a subject and must have a social theme? Come to my place!" I said to my sculptor friend a few days later. "Come and visit me after noon. I've got something for you to chew over. After you've looked you'll do a piece with a clear, fine, simple name, 'Halutz.'"

"Something in that. You're right. That idea never struck me. 'Halutz,' the sculpture of the age."

He visited me the following afternoon.

In the middle of the sands across the street a house was being built.

"Come here," said I. "Do you see that girl over there? That one, with a red handkerchief round her head?"

"Yes, I see her. Well?"

"Just sit down by the window and watch her for a while. Sit down and watch her working."

He sat down and I left him to himself.

Half-an-hour later I returned. He sat like an image and stared. When he sensed that I had come in he jumped up.

"Well?" I asked.

"Do you know the conclusion I've come to?" said he as though thinking aloud. "That the first of all revolts is the revolt of the women. You know, it's a real dirty trick; why do women get a smaller wage than men? Why, that girl over there does more alone in a single second than three men in ten minutes! Just look how she's working! She's as strong as a giant, that girl. Look! Just look how she's picking up that iron bar!"

He started forward as though he wished to run and help her.

Meanwhile the singing of a woman reached us. She was singing at her work. A sweet and pleasant voice, light, but agreeable to the ear and appealing to the heart. The men would answer back in snatches and every now and again she would laugh at their gruffness, like a stream murmuring through the soughing of the trees.

My friend was all aflame.

"What am I against such a creature?" said he in despair. "All my attempts are hopeless against such an original. 'Halutzta,' of course! Still, I'll try. And she's still young and fresh, you can see. Lovely girl."

We listened again to her happy singing and gazed in astonishment at her strength and diligence, wayward as a flowing fountain.

"Let's cross over!" proposed my friend. "I want to look at her nearby."

"All right. They're finishing right away, anyhow."

We went across and were a moment or two late. They were already leaving. We followed her. She was walking with her husband.

They turned into the street in which my friend the sculptor

lived. When we reached the house in which his room was, they entered.

We looked at one another like two clowns.

"That's your mother lioness," said I. "You're a great artist and no mistake. How was it you didn't know?"

We entered his room and heard her speaking through the wall:

"You attend to the children meanwhile. I won't be back for about an hour. It's two days since last I bathed."

We stared at each other as the same idea struck us. Perhaps this was the beautiful girl?

"Some hopes," said my friend. "You jump too fast. You're silly."

"Silly if you like, but come down to the hallway all the same."

We went down and in a moment she came out. ■ was the same "Jewish mother" we had seen coming out a few days earlier.

Looking at her face, naturally I recognised the beautiful bathing girl.

"A poet's hallucination," said my friend with mocking assurance.

We followed her in silence.

She proceeded straight to the sea.

When we arrived and found her in the sea we stared at one another as though we had gone silly.

The sun was setting. My friend caught my hand and pulled me to the right.

"Over here. Come over here. That's right."

I did not understand for a moment. But when I moved I saw her black head in the gold disc of the sun and the halutza stood on the sands, bright with a glory.

"Well, my lad, what name can you suggest for this piece?"

## THE BRIDEGROOM OF BLOOD

By H. HAZAZ

Translated by I. M. LASK

Hayyim Hazaz, born 1898, and brought up in the Ukraine. Experienced the Russian Revolution, and was in Constantinople and Paris. Went to Palestine in 1931.

Hazaz is perhaps the most important figure among the younger Hebrew writers, a pioneer. He bears comparison in many ways with James Joyce. The three long short-stories he has published, describing the effect of the Communist Revolution on the Jewish village, are among the best literary records of the Revolution. He has also issued part of a full length novel "In Forest Homes," describing the year before the 1905 Revolution. In some respects he can be considered the antithesis, almost consciously, of Brenner.

Hazaz demands a great deal from his reader, but if the reader gives it he receives it back with interest. Linguistically he is faced with the problem of re-introducing the nuance, the shade, into Hebrew, into which language precision and verbal exactitude have scarcely begun to return during the few years (less than half a century) of its renaissance. With tremendous erudition he makes use of Talmudic sources and of medieval literature to provide him with all he needs; and in contradistinction to many contemporary writers and scholars he holds that the immense cognate literary and linguistic heritage of Jewish Aramaic writings should be freely employed for the expansion of the Hebrew vocabulary. English readers know how much flexibility has been added to the Germanic trunk of the language by the infusion of French. The sinewy ease of Yiddish, with Slavonic elements grafted on to German and Hebrew, is a case in point. A play by Hazaz on the times and influence of Sabbathai Zevi the false Messiah is shortly to be published. In addition he is writing a non-propaganda story on life in new Palestine.

"Bridegroom of Blood" is one of a series on biblical themes. It has been compared to Doughty's "Arabia Deserta," and is an evocation of the spiritual and physical background of the first half of the Bible. It is said to be the first successful literary fugue in any language.

. . . . And it came to pass on the way at the lodging-place, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a flint

*and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet ; and she said Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me—Exodus 4 : 24-25.*

VIVID in the sun, tangible in the wilderness and lovely as noontide, Zipporah opened her eyes and lay, dazed with the delight of her sweet slumber ; the horn-base hung askew above her brow, and her finery glittered in the sun, glared in fire.

She was brilliant with her dream ; joy and radiance rose tendril-wise from the visions of her mind.

She had dreamed a dream once again, and pleasant had been this dream which she had dreamed.

In her dream God had appeared from Sinai, had darted down like a winged creature and had hovered over her bosom . . . she could yet feel on her bosom the heavy burden of light, like the sun which illumines the noon-hour with its vigour ; it had passed over her heart and scorched, had overflowed and oppressed her with flame and ardent pain. . . .

The searing fire still trembled upon her lips ; she was bowed down in her inmost self ; fire had kissed her fusing expiring soul.

She could still sense flames stroking her face ; the portions of her body groped as in a dark night, straying as drunken, bawling and fearstricken, the spirit not returning. . . .

Brilliant, radiant and exquisite she lay where she was, dipping in a brook of delights.

They had desired her ; the lofty ones of Heaven had made her mate ; the sun had aspired to her and had panted and gasped to her in ardour. The desert waste had puffed her in his heat, cleaving and splitting to the roots of the heart ; had deceived her and given her over to impure thoughts.

She was bright, pleasant and lovely.

The lofty heavens sparkled with the radiance of God's visage, with the fiery radiance of the Awe of Sinai ; His abiding-place was Sinai, the ends of the heavens ; and His supports were at their ends. As though God concealed Himself within the Universe and peered around, watched, lusted for, enticed His love from the fullness of the heavens, from right to left, from dawning to sea. . . .

Her twin breasts like a half-coulter, the camels shambling ever on, Zipporah raised her head :

"What was this thing that befell me ?"

Bemused and quaking she gazed hither and thither as seeking refuge from a foe.

"What was this that befell me here?"

Her hands failed, powerless, and withered.

Dread fell upon her and fear, panic of death.

"I shall indeed die, for I have seen God."

Knees trembling, she prostrated herself, fell on her face.

"I shall perish, indeed, for I have seen God."

Kneeling, she moaned in dread.

Until she raised her head and said to herself :

"Did God desire to slay me He would not have left His habitation these two times. Nor would he now have shewn me all these !"

She clapped her hands in joy :

"Did God desire to destroy me He would not have forsaken his habitation these two times. Nor would He have shewn me all these but now !"

She sprang up, dancing hither and thither, the stones and fringes clashing together from her throat :

"If God wished to slay me He would not have left His home twice. Nor would He have vouchsafed me all these but now !"

She butted with the horn on her brow, butted right and left :

"Did God desire to slay me He would not have forsaken his habitation these two times. Nor would He have vouchsafed me all these but now !"

Turbulent as a day of storm ; her heart fluttered convulsively like a bird in the air, and her flesh was radiant with joy. Nay, indeed she would not perish !

For had God desired to destroy her He would not have forsaken His habitation these two times, nor would He have shewn her all these but now.

She gazed radiant over the waste, turned her eyes straight ahead, saw Moses seated on his camel foremost of all.

Cloud-bound her visage, and she sat crushed of neck and heart, confounded.

She bowed her head, said :

"Be still."

And she sat crushed of neck and heart confounded.

She said :

"Hush."

And she sat crushed of neck and heart confounded.

For now the matter would be heard thus in the ears of her lord.

Thy wife hath strayed from thee, hath faithlessly deceived. . . .

And she sat crushed of neck and heart confounded.

And her goodman would hearken and his wrath would glow against her. . . .

And she sat crushed of neck and heart confounded.

And he would blot her name out from beneath the heavens. . . .

And she sat crushed of neck and heart confounded.

Joyless at heart, no light in the eye. The flush of her face was gone, her neck was crushed, she was silent as a desolate *tel*. Her heart was sore confounded, her spirit feared, feared without rest.

"Ai hoo, time and troubles, ai hoo !"

Stumbling by reason of the transgression of her strength ; no man near her, yet woe that her strength had stumbled.

"Ai hoo, time and mischance, ai hoo !"

God had wronged and abused her, had no mercy, but wished to destroy her wantonly, had led her astray from the path, forced her.

"Ai hoo, time and mischance, ai hoo !"

She dragged her keen, prolonged and dragged it, squeezed her head between her knees and sat sickening, weeping, sighing, her loathing on her face, her heart bitter and her spirit shamed.

Moses would gaze, his ire kindling ; would press his lips together, his eyes scattering dread ; his visage would grow as storm, as flame flashes on rock. . . .

Verily he would stone her till she perish, till death drop upon her lids !

Her soul had not desired to go, nor her heart to descend.

Yet she had descended and gone.

Nay. Her heart had not gone.

"Ai hoo, time and troubles, ai hoo."

Why did he wend to Egypt, his feet in the wilderness ? . . .

She raised her head a moment, moved to numbness and perplexity of heart.

"Would Moses go down to Egypt for nought ?"

Her bewildered eyes strayed hither and thither and she sank down upon the mattress ; her face was fallen and her thought confused, wavering and restless. . . .

Suddenly she was ripped as by fire from heaven ; her eyes grew and filled with flame ; her face glowed lurid, the hair of her head rose, and a screech of despair lodged in her throat.

"Would Moses go down to Egypt for nought ? "

What indeed could be within his inmost heart ! He sought another Zipporah and for that he went to Egypt, went away !

Her eyes flared, her face blazed as a flame puffed at, fed and crackling. She was all of her afire.

She knew now why he held aloof from her, now she knew indeed ! He sought another Zipporah.

Was she then such, and so grievous a burden, that he need change her for another ? Or was she of the house-parings, or perchance come of blemished stock ?

Or mayhap her visage was wan, her eyes blear, her, nostrils pinched, her ears heavy ; or was she squat or green hued ? Or mayhap a barren mule, putting forth no branch and bearing no fruit, neither building nor builded, that he should do this thing and with deceit ! . . .

Now indeed she knew why he held aloof from her, making her as a wilderness, as a widow, as a woman in her courses ; now she knew in sooth. . . .

She passed an hour sombre as night.

All of her gloom, confused and tumultuous ; her hands gripped her plaits ; her breath soughed heavily through her nostrils, stopped again and again, as though to force a great bitter cry from her. A howl and wail of destruction whereat would tremble wilderness and the bases of the world. . . .

Twisting like a blazing strip of bark, she threw herself down, writhing, kicking, tearing at her hair ; she struck her face, her flaring fury increasing.

"Another Zipporah ! Another Zipporah !"

Screeches were uprooted from her lips as flames are torn from the coalpan and mount aloft.

"Another Zipporah !"

Now let him see and know !

Nay in sooth ; but now let him see and know !

The Lord is God, nor is there other, beside Him there ■ no God ! The Lord ■ God, nor is there other, beside him there ■ no God ! . . .

Swaying hither and thither in eagerness, she burrowed amid the vessels in agitation, took her ornaments and began to deck herself in haste.

She set the hairnet on her brow, and the frontlet from ear to ear.

She wound the band round her hair, set the strings upon her cheeks and the necklace on her throat ; so that she might seem full in flesh.

She hung the chain and the moon-amulets, the drops and the veil ; and so with all the rest, four and twenty ornaments ; she sat bedecked as a bride, fashioned of storm and flame ; there had been none like unto her for beauty since the days of Naamah sister of Tubal-Cain, and those daughters of Adam of goodly mien whom the sons of God had taken to wife.

Turbulent and comely, so lovely as to merit her own praise ; the fringes lay upon her robes, her necklaces crossing the fringes and stretching from ear to ear and from cheek to cheek ; the rows and the nose-ring blazed, the chains and the moon-amulets burned, pressing flashing flames forth into the sun.

She raised her countenance and gazed at the heavens, sat waking her belly and rousing her breasts, turning around with laughter, dragging at love and charming aloft :

“ From the summit of Sinai, from the crest of Horeb and the Heights of God ! ”

“ Garbed, yea robed in glory, might and valiant, a man of war ! ”

She fell, hiding her face in the mat, choking with suppressed tears. . . .

Scaled-up and brimming with fears and dread, the Land of Egypt flickered before her eyes as a vale where all trees rise, wherein all herbage flourishes, whence every duct of water flows.

Behold the store-cities, the walls shimmering, veiled in mists of purple, scarlet and ivory.

Behold the princes, Uza and Azael ; Elah and Eloth and each daughter of divinity. . . .

Behold the wizards garbed in death's heads, beast-skin and bird-skin ; all possessed of enchantments and weavers of spells ; lemans and harlots more than the daughters of Ashtoreth and Milcom ; clothed in majesty, burning incense of myrrh. . . .

Zipporah shrank, shrank down, and moaned silently.

"Ai hoo, time and mischance, ai hoo !"

Who would lead her to Sela, to the brook of copper ?

Would that she might return to her mother, blest above the women of the tent.

"Ai hoo, time and mischance, ai hoo !"

Yes, would that she returned, that she returned from wayfaring, that she went not down to Egypt as she had never yet descended.

"Ai hoo, time and mischance, ai hoo !"

Or that God might seal the way from her ; as the day when the heavens had warred, when He had sealed the deep and barred it, had commanded : Thus far shalt thou come but no farther. . . .

She knew great bitterness and grievous anguish, raising keen and lament in secret, her eyes dripping tears. She sent her eyes across the widths of the wilderness, to the ends of sky and brightness—

Whence would her help come ?

She gazed despairing in every direction, and as she lay all shrunken, so shrank her soul within her.

Hushed, hushed her beginning ; quietly, quietly she shook hither and thither, her eyes closed and her lips moving in the charm :

"Mountains in the Heavens, mountains ! Mountains upon Earth, mountains ! Gather unto me and set yourselves around, seat ye here, and be firm set !

"For the daughter ye have strengthened, set yourselves ! For the daughter ye have nourished, set yourselves ! Lest mine enemy be glad, yea, she that troubleth me, set yourselves firm !

"Mountains of the Heavens, I call you ! Pillars of the Universe, I beseech you ! Ascend and subdue the land from end unto end ! that the traveller may return, the wayfarer before you !

"Yea, conspire against the plain and the path, and send forth the lowland and the stream, and smite ye, yea smite the dale and the desert. Where there is desert let the mountain-heights be, and where the stream—the flanks of the mountains ; where there is flatland—the hills of the pard ; till my goodman return, return to his tents.

"Ye pallid mountains, fence us about ! Mountains of secrecy, stand over us ! Mountains in the skies, surround us ! Mountains, black and red and white ! Mountains in your height, mountains in your thickness of cloud and every lofty hill ! Ye doubly lofty mountains, ye mountains thousandfold exalted ! Mountains twin and folded, mountains united, mountain chains ! Mountains East and West ! Yea, mountains of prey, be stalwart together, stand erect and take God's countenance captive ; till my goodman return, return to his tents."

Mourning, dumb in her sighing, she sat swaying hither and tither, nodding her head . . .

The land of Egypt appeared to her open as a meadow ; and she trembled and shook.

Many many maidens adorned and scented, all their garments perfumed with cassia, merrily dancing in market and road ; the whole land filled with them from end to end. . . .

She tore at her throat, oppressed by its necklace, as though freeing herself from the slave's neck-band, and stared confusedly around, without path or refuge.

Her eyes grew large, were kindled with flame ; and the breath of her nostrils swelled within her, seething, puffing, writhing, as snake-venom.

Suddenly she raised her head and cried out, her upflung hands clutching at the air.

And in that instant—

The wilderness quaked, cast itself prostrate and cried out bitterly ; and the sound of the roar, roar of a wounded beast, burst out and passed from end to end ; fear, dread round about, terrors and desolation. . . .

And it did hap on the way at a lodge.

The shade above the lodge stretched heavy and thick.

Rank within rank, the slight erect palm stems raised their dome of leaves on high.

More wood than leaf, tall acacias stood with their multitude of sharp white thorns like elders set over the congregation.

Warped, crooked terebinths, terebinths the wood of which is meet for the bows and bulwarks of the rowboats on the Nile, stood wedged in their mighty piles of greenery.

Here and there, amid the thickets of tangled clutching mint, of bending fig and of untrimmed sycamores, the broom flickered white and emitted the savour of its bitter balsam.

Figtrees cleft a way amid the rocks, tenting and canoping the ground ; their fallen leaves bathed in the broken ducts when the water flowed scurrying over the herbage and amid the trees, giddy, frigid, and clear ; and moistened the air, fragrant as a perfumer's mart. . . .

The tent loomed black in a snow-white brake of lofty flowering broom.

A small fire burned beside it ; a thin pallid plume of smoke rose palmwise and slowly spread on high.

The three camels grazed, freed of their burdens.

By the waterduct opposite the tent sat Zipporah solitary, decked and arrayed like a bride. Zipporah was burdened with suffering as with a pair of millstones, and her heart was sore bitter. . . .

The boy crawled at her feet, crawled in the grass, and cooed and gurgled to his heart's content. . . .

From time to time Zipporah roused from her reverie ; watched the boy to guard him from snake, from hoofed beast, from the thorns and from the pool of water lest he fall therein. . . .

She mused to force upon herself forgetfulness of the pain and anguish which had befallen her. But the thoughts of misfortune rose of themselves and were pounded in her heart like spices in a mortar ;

Could she restrain her heart in its dungeon, by tow, by cedar-wood, or by mullein, the wick of the desert ?

For gladness had ceased in her heart and was no more ; ■ had taken wing like a bird and vanished.

Her heart had been filled with precious stones, but now—with

charcoal embers. Her heart had been a light of day, but now—was gloom ; rejoicing and glad—to nought and nothingness.

There had been a diadem in her hand ; it had been taken from her. The grace of earth was lacking in her eyes, her heart was ill in all. Her goodman had betrayed her as a vision of the night, her husband—as a morning cloud ; she was as a wilderness. . . .

Thoughts of misfortune rose of themselves, wedged themselves in like cow-wheat among canes, like iron nails.

What indeed could she do now ?—

Though her spirit might depart, she knew not.

Should she wend homeward, return to her mother's tent. Should she sit here for ever, till her appointed days be finished and her memory lost from earth. . . .

Though her soul might depart, she knew not ; no word, no counsel, nought. . . .

Would that she had wings, pinions like a dove ; then she would soar and return ■ Sela, the brook of copper !

Would that she had a mighty voice ; then she would summon her mother to aid her in her straits !

Would that she were strong of heart ! Then she would come before her spouse and her words would make him abhorrent unto himself ; and she would rede dooms upon him !

Would that she had strength of arm ; then would she go down to Egypt and smite every woman in the land of Egypt, from the princess seated upon her throne down to the girl-slave at the quern ; and there would rise a great outcry such as hath never been nor ever will be more. . . .

At her wit's end she gazed around. She looked to the right and saw a palm tree with a long shadow. She said :

"As the shadow of this palm stretches afar, so is rest far from my soul."

She looked left, saw the stump of a hewn-down palm and said ;

"As this hewn palm will not grow, so is my generation cut down and will never renew."

She gazed before her and watched her son crawling in the grass ; and her ruth for him arose. She charmed :

"My son is a sheep alone, a youngling kid strayed from his flock."

Zipporah stretched out to the child and beckoned him with her finger :

" Son, son."

And the boy—was a boy.

He sat on his behind, turned his curly head toward her and sat hesitating as though considering a matter. Then he winked his eyes thrice, and stretched his mouth in wide laughter. . . .

Zipporah caught him by the foot and took his little body in her arms ; and she stood rocking and caressing him, kissing his face, cooing and weeping and uttering every affectionate expression. . . .

She charmed :

" Laden in the belly, borne in the womb."

She kissed his tiny hands and wept.

She charmed :

" Thy hand is full of comfort, many handfuls of comfort, my son ! Thy fingers are rolls of gold, thine arm—a sword sheath !

She lifted him on high and swung him from side to side.

She charmed :

" My son is a winged bird, of happy singing wings ! A youngling kid, choicest of the flock, fat and every portion good ! "

She pressed his full belly to her face.

She charmed :

" Unpruned of flesh is my son, eight days and upward yet hath not witnessed the blood of the covenant ! "

She wept on his neck, wept bitterly, and told him all her heart's bitterness.

His father had acquired another mother ; another mother—he who had given him being ; therefore had he forsaken them in the wilderness, to a desert land, to Egypt, the plains of Zoan. . . .

Thus and thus did she tell, and thus and thus she wept ; and with her wept the boy.

They would weep bitterly, one with the other in bitter mourning till the lad waxed big. . . .

Sobbing, she bent over the boy, quieted him, appeased him with her words. No, she would not go down to Egypt. Ten plagues have the Egyptians. Blood, frogs and lice have the Egyptians. Rats snatch the newborn of the Egyptians ; the first born of Death would consume the falsehood, the Lord of Terrors—the falsehood of their skins, and the killing spirits—their beasts. . . .

Thus and thus she spoke to soothe him, weeping as she spoke, and the boy wept with her.

So would they bitterly weep with each other, in bitter mourning till the lad waxed big . . .

She bent sobbing over the boy and quieted him, soothed him with her words.

The Lord would be wroth with the Egyptians and destroy them, each woman known of man and every child among the women ! Burning and salt all their land, seedless as salt ; they would sow no seed and bear no fruit ; they, their sons, their daughters, their flocks, their herds and all their cattle ; as though eternally dead, an everlasting reproach till sun and moon were gone.

Thus and thus she spoke to still him, weeping as she spoke ; and with her wept the boy.

So would they weep with each other bitterly, in bitter mourning till the boy waxed big. . . .

She took him and riding him on her shoulder she turned and walked in the shade of the lodge to near the trees and the founts of water.

Ripping her way through the cane-brake, hidden to her neck in grass and growth, she emerged and went on, her soul moaning within her but her tongue a song.

She came to the fount, a fountain dwelling in stones, concealed from the sun and overhung with green ; two rivulets fled from it, leaping stone to stone they fled, scurrying giddily, bright as gold ; hid in the herbage and vanished.

Zipporah bent low by the fountain, dipped her hands, scattered water on her head, and recited a charm under her breath.

She rose and went on weeping ; and with her wept the boy. . . .

She turned and passed through the shade of the lodge to approach the trees and the fountains.

She came to the thicket, the terebinth thicket, the holy terebinths in whose shade listed the titan Rephaim to rest. She stood with straightened palms and whispered a charm under her breath.

She rose to go and went on weeping, and with her wept the boy.

She turned and passed through the thickness of the lodge to approach the trees and the fountains. . . .

She came to the wood, the tamarisk wood, the warlocks'

tamarisk in whose shade the warlocks delighted to sit, their spells in their hands.

She stood with flattened palms and raised a charm beneath her breath.

She rose to go and went on weeping ; and with her wept the boy.

She turned and passed the depth of the lodge to approach the trees and the fountains.

She came to the brake, the brake of fig trees, the restful fig tree in whose shade the old women delight to sit and drowse and dream.

She stood with hands held straight, reciting a charm beneath her breath.

She rose to go and went on weeping, and with her wept the boy.

She turned to pace the depth of the lodge to near the trees and the fountains.

She came to the wood, the wood of date palms, most graceful of trees, most choice of the forest ; in whose shade the maidens delight to rest, swart and comely.

She stood with outstretched arms and repeated a charm beneath her breath, speaking thus.

As the sun in eastern skies                      Is the palm amid the trees.

Awesome 'mid the warriors, so the palm

Rears in might ;

Thy youth is age on age,

And thy glory on thy visage ;

For as the sun in eastern skies is

the palm amid the trees ;

For as the sun in eastern skies the

palm

Establisheth the world.

As rays the clusters haste to meet mine eyes.

As rays the clusters haste to meet my face.

Rays and clusters,

Both shed light for me.

Thy praise is sweet for me, thy

goodwill with me ;

Thy good feats which are with thee.

Sixty are they and three hundred.

Yea three hundred are they and eke sixty.

	I have blessed ye, all your number.
In assembly	
	Tall I sing you nor shall bend,
Sixty and	
	Three hundred years and evermore.

Zipporah sat solitary, her face lowering and black as the lowering mouth of a kiln.

She had shed tears in the sun, she had shed tears in the shade, amid the trees, beside the founts of water—like a fish within a net.

The songbird of her spirit had been blinded; her heart clamoured, drooled venom like a serpent.

Obscene thoughts fluttered about her like flying creatures, like defiling black flying creatures. . . .

In assiduous grief she bettered her face, gazing into the fountain.

"Thou hast beauty, Zipporah! Thou hast beauty, Zipporah!"

The fountain whispered to her, the heavens peering thence.

In assiduous grief she went and passed before her goodman.

She was thinking;

Mayhap she would find favour before him.

She passed in front, returned, and sat solitary.

Her tears were sun to her, her tears were shade, trees, founts of water—as a fish within a net.

The bird of her soul was pierced, her heart made outcry, the venom twisted like a snake.

Evil thoughts fluttered about her like birds, like polluting black birds.

She bettered her face in assiduous grief, gazing into the fountain.

"Thou'rt beautiful, Zipporah! Thou'rt beautiful, Zipporah!"

The fountain whispered to her, the heavens peering thence.

In assiduous grief she passed before her husband.

She was thinking;

Perchance he would turn his mind to her.

She paced and passed, paced and returned, sat solitary. . . .

Tears her lot in sun, tears her lot in shade, mid trees and by the fountain—as a fish within a net.

Malign thoughts fluttered above her like birds, like unclean black birds.

She set her hands on her head and her eyes welled tears.

"Ah woe, Lord God." . . .

And her eyes trickled tears.

"Ah woe, Lord God." . . .

And her eyes trickled tears.

"Ah woe, Lord God, gaze from Thy mountain and see."

So she entreated and spake, then rose from her words.

She remembered God, a man of war, robed and garbed in pride, might and glory, who had turned towards her.

Perturbed she gazed around as men stare and peer in thick murk and black night. . . .

Suddenly she sprang to her feet confused of soul and bewildered as though one had set an ambush for her, seized the boy in her arms, rushed and sat on the other side.

She set her hands on her head and her eyes welled tears.

"Ah woe, Lord God."

And her eyes trickled tears.

"Ah woe, Lord God."

And her eyes trickled tears.

"Ah woe, Lord God, my goodman hath forsaken me, both me and my seed."

So she spake beseeching, and ceased from her words.

She remembered God, a man of war, robed and garbed in pride, might and glory, had lain in her bosom. . . .

Perturbed she gazed around as men stare and peer through black murk and deep night.

She suddenly leapt to her feet, bewildered of soul and mazed as one surprised by an ambush, seized the boy in her arms and ran and sat by the fountain.

She set her hands on her head and her eyes welled tears.

"Ah woe, Lord God." . . .

And her eyes trickled tears.

"Ah woe, Lord God." . . .

And her eyes trickled tears.

"Ah woe, Lord God, he hath made nought of the covenant between Thee and his seed, and hath not guarded it!"

Perturbed she gazed around as men stare and peer through the gloom and murk of midnight.

Suddenly she leapt to her feet, astounded of spirit and mazed as one surprised in an ambush, and seized the boy in her arms, her face to heaven.

Her heart was hot within her, tender as a fresh-green plot ; her eyes flamed and her visage was a new-kindled fire ; fiery wrath and flaming zeal.

"He hath made nought of the covenant between Thee and his seed, and hath not kept it !"

The soles of her feet were loosed and she began a supple walk, fanning herself with her robe, lustworthy in her grace, embellished in her finery.

"He hath made nought of the covenant between Thee and his seed, and hath not kept it !"

Fringes clashed on stones, earrings blazed together with nose-ring and links, rings, bracelet and cloak.

"He hath made nought of the covenant between Thee and his seed ; he hath not kept it !"

She clapped her hands, stamped her feet and burst into a joyful dance, her breasts leaping, song on her tongue.

"He hath made nought of the covenant between Thee and his seed ; he hath not kept it !"

*And behold a mighty wind come from across the desert ; tempest, whirlwind and heavy cloud. The trees shook and whistled and bowed their tops ■ the earth.*

Terrified, Zipporah clutched the boy and leaped up to flee, sprang bemused and distraught, rushing from side to side like a blind man, shrieking in distraction.

*And darkness and earthquake came from the desert ; the Earth trembled and the mighty mountains.*

Her path reeled and pitched ; Zipporah staggered, ran, fell, rose, swayed, was tossed like a girl's playball. She shrieked and screeched, the boy screeching after her, writhing and twisting as though stung by a scorpion.

*Then there was silence round about, heavy silence bearing down on the fullness of the wilderness.*

*And the Lord came from Sinai, from Mount Horeb, from Mount Paran ; His glory covered the Heavens and His light filled the wilderness.*

" God is in the midst of us ! " . . .

Zipporah whispered in dread and terror and hid her face.

It seemed to her :

A spirit of zeal had passed over God ; therefore had he roused her jealousy against Moses. . . .

Trembling, terrified she gazed at the tent, and behold—

Moses falling on his face. . . .

" God is exceeding wroth and would destroy him ! "

The thought flashed through her heart as lightning glares through thick cloud.

Terror-stricken and bemused, she tore the veil from her face and uprooted from her place she screeched. Her scream passed from end to end of the lodge.

Speedier than a young cow, her voice like the howl of the wind in Sela, she stood a moment confused and undecided, cast a distraught eye about her, gasped and breathed deep together.

And she suddenly smote the boy to the ground, and roaring distraught like a wild beast strangling its prey, she pounded upon him, fell on him, seized the rock and cut off the foreskin. . . .

The boy had no chance to cry out—

And hushed around was the desert, seized by listening silence—

Gleaming like six talents of copper, gory and awesome in her beauty and finery, she sprang up, cleft between God and Moses, stretching her hands aloft towards God—and the wilderness vibrated and shook with awe and majesty—and cried :

" Bridegroom of blood ! Yea, bridegroom of blood art Thou to me ! " . . .



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## VANILLA-PISTACHIO

By TRISTAN BERNARD

*Translated by R. O. HEER*

Tristan Bernard, born 1866, at Besançon. An important figure in French literature. A great wit and a writer of comedies, many of which have been produced on the French stage with great success. His work is characterised by a light, discreet, subtle, smiling irony. Several volumes of his shorter plays have been published. He has also published many novels and short stories.

PERHAPS Mlle. Gantellier was not very old at the time that she gave me lessons in history and in French. But I was only eight and all people past fifty appeared to me on one level known as old age.

Mlle. Gantellier was tall and fat, with a complexion the colour of butter. A few not very natural curls hardly succeeded in improving her great forehead. She emitted an odour which was not exactly bad, but neither was it agreeable. And her big text book, wrapped in faded, yellowish paper, that she fetched out of an enormous handbag, smelt just as she did.

She came three times a week, from four to five. How long one hour seemed, when I had to do lessons! In the end I was made to sit with my back to the clock to keep me from watching it all the time. But as I never stopped wriggling and turning, I managed now and again to steal a furtive glance at the two hands, desperately immobile, lazier even than I.

Some days I replied to questions with astounding rapidity. On others all the intelligence I possessed suddenly deserted me, and I sat with drooping mouth and wide-open eyes. And Mlle. Gantellier repeated and shouted her questions like a postman outside an empty house. Sometimes my appearance was deceptive, because, sitting screwed up on my chair with my eyebrows contracted and my lips tightly pressed together, I appeared to be concentrating all my attention with furious energy, and yet I was obviously suffering from lack of hearing. Then, suddenly, contact

between question and answer was established, and to the query "Who won the battle of Vouillé," I replied "Clovis" in a casual and condescending voice.

One day Daddy decided that every time I did my lesson satisfactorily my teacher and I should go out together, and eat ice-cream.

So the two of us went to the confectioners. I had a chocolate ice and Mademoiselle a vanilla-pistachio. Then it was her turn to cut adrift from the world. I always finished long before she did and watched her take a small spoonful first of yellow, then of green ice-cream, and let it linger on her tongue, with her eyes closed.

From that day on all my lessons were satisfactory.

Mlle. Gantellier was exceedingly severe during the sixty minutes she dedicated to me, for the prospect of chocolate ice had not disciplined my vagabond soul. But when Daddy and Mummy arrived at the end of the hour, my teacher invariably reported :

"He did his lesson satisfactorily to-day."

And we went to the confectioners.

One day I had been impossible. . . . It is one of the blackest memories of my youth. I had stuck my finger into the ink, I had chewed paper and unravelled the fringes of the carpet, and I had been unable to complete even the most famous names, although Mlle. Gantellier generously provided me with the first and even the second syllable.

At the end of the lesson I knew that this time the verdict must go against me. So, afraid of hearing anyone else pronounce my doom, I rashly took the lead, and as my father came into the room, I cried out tearfully :

"I haven't been good !"

"Ha ! Ha !" Daddy said, without much conviction, but a slave to principle, then "there will be no ice-cream to-day."

A terrible silence followed.

Suddenly a voice of goodness, of supreme indulgence, seemed to descend from heaven :

"Monsieur, forgive him. He was confused. Next time he will be more docile and, above all, more attentive."

Daddy, whose severity was only waiting for something to soften it, fetched out of his pocket the money to pay for the ice-creams.

We went out, Mademoiselle and I. She walked beside me, enormous and silent. Finally she decided to speak.

"Once and for all, my child, remember this : it is not for you to say whether or not I am satisfied with you. I alone am the judge, and I am big enough to judge for myself."

## THE RABBI AND THE SIREN

By ANDRÉ SPIRÉ

Translated by R. O. HEER

André Spire, born 1868, at Nancy. The "father" of the Jewish movement among the Jewish writers in France. Was himself profoundly influenced by Israel Zangwill whom he translated into French. His works include "Poèmes Juifs," "Les Juifs et la guerre," "Quelques Juifs," "Israel Zangwill, James Darmesteter, Otto Weininger," "Quelques Juifs et Demi-Juifs."

*By the prayer that brings about the union, man attracts the supreme Will. God grants the wishes of such a man. . . . Of such a man the Scripture says : "You form your plans and they succeed."—ZOHAR.*

It was between afternoon and evening prayer.

Under the vertical folds of the fore-sail Mordecai spoke to God :

"I have obeyed all Thy commandments, all the orders of those who command in Thy name.

"At the hours demanded by them I sang psalms ; my voice rose in the heart-rending chant of the lamentations. I was happy to cry before the Wall, to kneel in the blue shadows, under the roofs of the synagogues of Jerusalem.

"I was told : 'We pray, we fast for the salvation of the communities of Israel. But the communities of Israel forget our Holy Mountain.'

"To fast for Thee, oh Lord, is nothing, and Thou knowest our bloodless faces, our thin bodies in our too-ample robes ; our eyes always raised to Thy heaven, to Thee. But oil is needed for Thy lamps, vellum for Thy Sepher-Toras, stones and cement for Thy synagogues. And in spite of tempests, of waves dashing over my ship, of the torments of sea-sickness, in the midst of the scoffing sailors, among fishermen and merchants, but more often among corsairs and pirates, I go from port to port, from village to village, wherever Jews dwell, begging for Jerusalem.

"Oh Lord, I have suffered for Thee. I have been scorched

with the heat, I have been parched with thirst, I have gone hungry many times. All that ■ left to me is this hat of fur of which the seams are coming undone and the hairs are matted, this caftan which was once of purple velvet, and now the cobblestones on the quays, the sand on the long roads, my heels and my wrists, have worn the edges thin and frayed.

"I possess nothing. But having my quadrant, my compass, my sextant, with simple needs, and with the signs, oh Lord, that Thou manifesteth unto me from time to time, I have till now been able to send my Masters all the fruits of my quests without keeping anything for myself—not even the price of my passages or the hire of the camel-drivers.

"And of the truest, the humblest of Thy sons Thou lettest dry up the sources, Thou hinderest him from obeying the commandment that Thou gavest unto man, when Thou didst create him out of the clay of the earth.

"Who among these African communities will give his daughter to the beggar for Jerusalem? What father loves Thy name enough to deliver his child to the hazards, the dangers of him who lives but for Thee? Is there any among these virgins with their arched eyebrows, whose hands I have touched, whose bodies I have felt brush against mine on the terraces, who would have the courage to flee with him whom she loves, as did Rachel, in obedience to Thy wish, taking with her the Teraphim of her father?

"I am twenty-two years old. And I am pure, oh Lord. Pure in my flesh! I have not corrupted any virgin, any wife in Israel. I have not approached the impure women of the heathens. But not pure in my heart. And by day when I am not speaking, and in the night when sleep begins to enfold me, I am assailed by bewildering thoughts, by troubling visions, and my sleep is defiled by deceptive and exhausting dreams."

Thus prayed Mordecai, his head uplifted, his eyes raised towards heaven, his lips murmuring, and his hands and arms flung out imploringly. And there was none to be astonished at his strange behaviour. For except the helmsman slumbering in the stern, the ship was deserted. The crew were out in two boats, hauling in towards the motionless ship a long drag-net, in the midst of which, in a carmine, turquoise and emerald pool, were imprisoned the sardines, streaks of silver.

On the cherry-red cupola of the sky pale coral clouds, elongated, evanescent shapes, were forming and dispersing. Boats, fishermen, even the cork floats of the net, and the mischievous troops of dolphins, which love the neighbourhood of ships, moved in a rosy transparency, like the flesh under the nails of a youthful hand. In the distance, the first lights of Algeria were scintillating.

Mordecai murmured :

"Hallowed be the Eternal One, source of benedictions. Be praised, oh Eternal One, our God, King of the Universe, Thou who by Thy word makest the evening approach, Thou who separatest light from darkness, Thou who makest the day vanish and bringest night, be praised, oh Master of miracles !"

But these miracles, the changing nuances of the descending dusk, ever-present reflections of the grace of God, meant nothing to the sailors, ignorant of the beauty of their own attitudes and gestures in the slanting light ; they were too much engrossed in their task.

The net is suddenly agitated. Has another dolphin got caught in their net, only to escape presently by tearing through the meshes ?

But no ! The net is strong, and holds.

But when they had thrown it into the bottom of the ship, instead of the leaden snout, and the fat, grey body of a dolphin, there was a long white form, trembling, exhausted and bruised, entangled in the meshes.

"—A woman !" exclaimed the captain, his imagination picturing a beautiful slave from whom he could derive pleasure or profit. And he waved aside his men.

"—Not a woman, a siren," said Mordecai, pointing out at the ends of her beautiful legs, light, flexible, transparent fins, attached to her ankles like the wings to the legs of Mercury.

"—A siren, a female serpent !" And the captain lifted his hatchet.

Mordecai gripped his wrist.

"—Why ? ■ ■ futile to hurt the genii of the sea. For they arise and revenge themselves. If you wish to anchor in harbour to-night, and sail without harm to-morrow, to find plentiful catches, gain their friendship. I know the words that will win their favour."

And he opened the net, liberated the siren from the seaweed,

## THE RABBI AND THE SIREN

the jelly-fish, the shells and the slime of the sea. Then he wrapped her in a piece of cloth and began to pray.

And soon a strong breeze arose. And the ship, with the wake gleaming under the beams of the moon, sailed towards Algeria.

"Take her with you," said the captain. "She is yours. And since she brings good fortune, if ever you wish to return to Bôugie, Bone, or Tunis I will take you with me, without charging you for the passage."

And when the sun rose above Cape Matifou—not far from where, a few years previously, Charles V had hurriedly re-embarked his troops, decimated by the arrows of the Turks and the Moors under Barbarossa—Mordecai had so much interrogated the legions of stars and the celestial spirits, combined so many letters and numbers, repeated so many times the Name of the Eternal One, that he at last felt the glory of God enveloping him and according him the grace that he had demanded with so much humility and passion. It was no longer a goddess of the seas that was beside him, singing the same songs that he had heard by the islands he had passed when his father had taken him, as a child, from Salonica to Jerusalem. It was no longer a formidable enemy that he lovingly held to his breast and whose lips still somewhat salty, he kissed and kissed again. It was a slim young girl, full of feminine curves, supple and flexible, with a head small and rebellious, but with eyes pale-blue like the water of the Mediterranean foaming between the rocks of a bay.

She was his because by the Power of the Name he had conquered her from the pagan sea. She was similar in form and flesh to those whom so many of his race had taken unto them as mates. She was at his side, there on that beach, immobile, dreaming, without any attempt at flight or any movement of defence against his kisses. But she was not yet a Jewess. And to love her, marry her, take her in wedlock, was forbidden to him so long as she could not say to him as did Ruth to Naomi: "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God."

But the religion of Israel is not simple. Especially if it is taught, trembling with desire, to a being who so far has known

the world only by the intermediary of the din, the whispering, the murmuring of the air, who has communicated with other beings only through the harmonies that float over liquid surfaces, and whose songs, movements, attitudes are incomprehensible to those born on the worn and waveless crust of the earth.

Should he let her go ? To sink back into the world of animal and cruel divinities from which he had torn her ? Oh, importunate youth ! Oh blood, all too hot, that turned him from such a thought !

And like us all when we are in need or in pain, he called up one after the other, the faces, the names of his friends.

Some were in the Holy Land. Others were scattered in all parts of Egypt, Lybia, the States of Barbary. But there was one quite near, actually in Algeria, the austere Ben Eliakim, Rabbi and craftsman, who, outside his hours of meditation and prayer, weaved with the help of his wife, Sephorah, and his two daughters, those delicate laces of gold, silver or silk, beloved by Turkish, Arabian and Jewish women.

Mordecai asked him for help and advice, introduced the girl as a stranger from a foreign country whom he had saved from shipwreck, but omitted to mention the circumstances of her saving.

Ben Eliakim might have concerned himself also with the saving of a man from idolatry, but a young and beautiful girl is never quite a stranger, even to a Rabbi who is an enemy of proselytism, and whose flesh is mastered and calmed by the routine of conjugal life. As for Sephorah, she was delighted at the thought of having a young girl to teach, now that her daughters were grown up, and perhaps, at having one more to help in her workshop, a docile creature, and being a stranger in the land, not very exacting. So she offered to take the girl into her home.

With God's help, she would teach her in a few months all that a Jewish woman must know of the traditions, the ceremonies, and the Jewish family ritual.

And very soon, indeed, the girl, like the people of the house, touched with the tips of her slender fingers the mezuzah nailed to every door-post, and then kissed them after the contact. And on Friday evenings when Sephorah, placed the brass candlesticks on the white table-cloth, and recited :

“ Blessed art thou, oh Lord, our God, King of the Universe,

who hast commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights," she saw the lips of the young girl imitating the movements of her lips.

Soon that melodious mouth lost the round sounds, the murmurs, the low articulations to which it had been formed by kisses. Her voice soon became modulated to the hisses, bursts, gasps, gutturals of the Hebrew vocabulary. And soon Mordecai himself heard from the mouth that he loved the words that he did not tire of hearing. Ben Eliakim judged the time to have come to lead the young people under the marriage canopy.

But before that, Sephorah, as chaperon and godmother, took her to the ritual bath that must precede every Jewish marriage.

"You may be assured that she is Jewish, thoroughly Jewish," cried Sephorah, returning from the square white building, topped by a cupola, where in a Moorish pool the Jewish women bathed on the days fixed by the Law.

"Our baths are no pleasure! The Arabian women go to the hot-baths first. While we have a horrid, cold, bubbling and icy spring! It is hard. Particularly for the novices. They are disinclined to enter the water. We older women often have to push them in.

"But she is full of piety and fervour! We had hardly come in when she was already in the water, singing and swimming and diving. And how hard it was to get her out! I had to pull her out by force. She is 'pure, my friend! There is not a spot on her body that has not been touched by running water. She is purer than any woman ever was in Israel!"

And Ben Eliakim, placing his hand on her head, and observing that her cheeks were rosier, her mouth redder than he had ever seen it before, said:

"You shall be called Ghela, for your joy is in the flow of the waters."

Mordecai would have liked his young wife to have found her joy in the vast open waters, whose flow needs no movements of human bodies, but only the attraction of the stars and the breezes of the air.

But he did not dare.

What had he done? What words, what holy letters, what praises had he forgotten to pronounce when he had asked God to

make a woman of a siren ? A woman ! But not to have to keep her, like those infidel Mussulmen in the shadow of a harem, growing paler every day !

" Oh Lord ! Thou Who hast created woman, Who hast created love, why didst Thou permit me to be in the ship when that desirable body was thrown out on it, why didst Thou not restrain my hand that held back the hatchet, when my desire was not yet love !

" And why, when sitting on the seashore, when all her limbs, her features suddenly longed for the sea, and I, as if welded to her, was drawn with her like iron by the magnet, why didst Thou inapire in me the words that checked her, and saved my life, impossible now without her, unbearable with her ?

" Unbearable, here at least, oh Lord ! But elsewhere, far from the sea that pulls her, perhaps she will forget ?

And he remembered a village in the midst of palm trees, where he had once been made welcome, and where the orange trees, the pomegranate trees, the rose-bushes were watered by the clear waters of a shallow lake which was led by the Arab gardeners into thousands of irrigation canals.

And on foot, at the side of the donkey that carried Ghela, holding in her lap the son she had borne him, he marched south.

Here, far from the coast, she seemed calmer and more at ease. She appeared to grow accustomed to the dry air, often burning and laden with sand, to days spent enclosed in clay-built houses, to nights out on the terraces. Her pearl-like skin took on the colour of light tobacco, like that of certain African Jewesses, upon which the least emotion brings a transparent rosiness. Her feet no longer stumbled on that hard, rough surface where the body seems heavy and movements are not easy and gliding, but an effort.

She brought up her son Jair, a grave child, with his eyes always lifted to the sky, a little Levite, like his father, praying morning and evening, his face turned towards Jerusalem.

She busied herself with weaving scarves of pearl-grey gauze, like the smoke that floats at sunrise over the horizon of the desert. In Arabian fashion, she liked to wash her linen in the lake, stamping on it and pressing it with her bare feet. And at the proper

hours, she would raise the sluices and allow the freshness and the flow of running water to enter their garden.

Mordecai, calmer now, had again taken up his quest in the villages of the oasis and in the neighbouring oases. But he always returned to the house before the Sabbath eve.

The Sabbath table was prepared, and on it stood candles and flowers. Ghela wore her festive garments and her walk was like a dance. She smiled, and the smile on her lips—lips like little wings always ready to take flight—was the same smile which had captivated Mordecai on the day he had saved her on the ship. How he loved her, this one-woman man, surrendering himself with all the fire, all the vigour of youth; a Jew to whom the boundaries between sacred and profane are merged, and who in the union of man and woman does not only experience the delight of the absolute surrender of himself, the descent into the depths of another being, but also the presence of the divine Glory, of the Shechinah. She, whose body served as altar for the holy act accepted it, as do those captives whose blood cannot help boiling and seething under the caresses of those who by force or by wile, have torn them away from their parents, their homeland, their city.

But one day in the rainy season, when she was washing in the lake, she suddenly saw one of her companions put her ear to the ground. And then, screaming, all fled. Ghela remained alone, happy in the midst of the rising waters, which soon passed her ankles, then her knees. And when they were above her waist she let herself be carried away by the flood.

Mordecai found her, bruised and, as if caught in a trap, among the rocks at the bottom of a ravine, where the water charged with red clay swirled and roared, while little monkeys, leaping from branch to branch, pelted her with bits of dead wood, with dates and pomegranates.

So once more they had to leave.

The Jewish community that received them consisted of masons, saddlers, tanners, goldsmiths, and a few merchants who had all been settled for centuries on the slopes of the mountains facing south.

Their village was surrounded by open fields, which in spring

were covered with narcissi and violets. On the mountain slopes were orchards and vineyards, and the enormous clusters of grapes they yielded were like those that the envoys sent by Moses brought back from the valley of Eshkol. Nearby a dyke, keeping back the waters, had formed a little lake which, encircled by reeds, bamboos and willows, served as a bathing pool for the women.

Beside these azure waters, which only needed a little salt to convey the delight of her native sea, Ghela lived happily. Two twin daughters had been born to her, fair, with pearl-like skins, vivacious and supple and, like their mother, with fins on their ankles. Their life in this land of streams and cascades was nothing but play, romping and laughter.

When he went on his travels, Mordecai now took with him Jair, whose Bar-Mitzva was approaching. The old fears were gradually vanishing from his mind. But sometimes, before sleep came to him, with bloodless face and lips and panting chest he had a sudden vision of Ghela after her flight, the earth and the blood on her body. How long it had taken to heal her, to rid her of her disgust, her hate for the life they led !

But that now belonged to the past, was over, could not recur. She was full of life now. She played, she laughed, was a loyal comrade, an excellent housewife. On these slopes, where the waters lost themselves in the sand, on these mountain sides, insuperable barriers to the sea, she had forgotten her past life.

The peace lasted until the winter. And then the hand of God descended on the land.

What sin had they committed, this humble Jewish population, so obedient ■ the commandments of the Law, the demands of Tradition ? And if it was the sins of the Arabs among whom the Dispersion obliged them to live, why did the Heavenly Father punish them, the innocent Jews, together with the guilty ? In the land of Egypt, when He had sent the ten plagues to punish Pharaoh by the hand of Moses, did He not distinguish between those of Egypt and those of Israel, so that the children of Israel came to no harm ? And in the days of Abraham, had He not promised that if there would be ten righteous men in Sodom, it would not be destroyed ? And if there are not ten righteous men in this land, if there is but one, oh Lord, will'st Thou not spare it for the sake of this one righteous man, Thou Who hast said :

“ The righteous man is the foundation of the world ? ”

"But who is righteous, and who is not righteous in Thy eyes? Have I always obeyed Thee? Have I always carried Thee in my thoughts? Did I praise Thee in all the actions of my life? And in the embraces of my wife, the caresses, the smiles and the glances of my children, did I look for Thee or for myself? In the midst of these hostile populations, have I served Thee, proclaimed Thee openly? Have I not sometimes accepted an impure dish? Have I not sometimes let the hour of prayer pass? Have I always and everywhere carried on my garments, my hands, my forehead, those signs and symbols that must distinguish the Jew from the infidel?"

"How heavily Thy Law weighs down, oh Lord, on those to whom Thou hast granted the favour of a little happiness, a little peace! And how it is difficult, when one loves, to distinguish between that which is permitted and that which is forbidden! How often have I been unable to resist bringing home dresses, shawls, necklaces, toys, titbits, instead of sending their price to Jerusalem!"

Thus Mordecai tormented himself in this year full of disasters.

A rainy spring had brought swarms of crawling beasts, and insects, which stung, devoured, rotted the flowers, the vegetables and the fruit, the promise and the harvest of the earth. Then the yellow hail clouds had come, felling the trees, the shrubs in the gardens and the orchards. Now it was the wind of the desert, with its dust blinding the people and burning what the rain and hail had spared. The open fields were now mere mattresses of calcinated plants mixed with sand which gave no nourishment to the herds and flocks, but only made them thirsty. Only a little cistern, built into the rocks of a cave, from which oozed a few drops collected by the roots of the plants and walnut-trees, gave the inhabitants as much as they needed to still their thirst and to cook their food.

Inside the house, that swarmed with flies, mice, and yellow and black lizards, vicious as salamanders, Ghela and her daughters lay prostrate on the ground, on straw mats, unable to move, their eyes shut and their mouths gasping, like hunters after chasing a too swift gazelle. Mordecai and Jair prayed in low voices or, with clumsy hands, attempted to do some essential housekeeping.

But one night, scarcely fresher than the day, when they returned from gathering the dry dates and millet grains, to which their

nourishment had been reduced, they found on entering the glowing walls of their house neither Ghela nor her daughters. None of the neighbours, not even those whose houses, built into the side of the mountain, had retained some freshness, had seen them. In the brooks, in the cascades, in the lake not a drop of water, not even a little moist slime. But in the lanes and on the hills, where the wind had gathered the sand, Mordecai found their footprints. They led him to the cistern from which came a sound of splashing water and of joyous voices.

And the Jews were not the least indignant with the stranger women who bathed, and that in the last small reserve of drinking water, when the whole land was dying of thirst.

They were saved from the fury of both Arabs and Jews by the village chieftain who loved Mordecai for his piety and his knowledge of stars and plants.

He hid them in his house and, when they were healed of their wounds, he helped them to join a caravan, carrying the flour and the barley of the Atlas towards the Sahara.

At Ouargla where several trails met, they encountered a Moghrebin caravan carrying to Egypt ivory and gold dust, which the Sudan natives exchanged, weight for weight, measure for measure, for salt.

Now it was to the East that Mordecai was fleeing with his wife and daughters. Anywhere else than in Palestine life would be impossible for him, for he no longer dared to leave his house, and he only slept a troubled sleep, broken by nightmares.

From the closed palanquin, where they lay, silent, hardly daring to breathe, from the tent, where turn by turn with his son he kept watch on them, he was sure they could not escape. There, in Palestine, after these months of trial, they would again become his, and Ghela, born to a new life, would at last be his wife, flesh of his flesh, for ever.

For on the slopes of the Holy Mount towards which speed from all the corners of the earth the tears, the desires of all Israel, and where there meet for worship and adoration all those who have given up everything to be nearer to the residence of the Lord, their God, wrapped in an ocean of prayers, cannot sport with the fate of a whole people, as He may with the solitary man who prays to Him alone. He would grant him that which, in the passion of the flesh, he had forgotten to ask of Him when he had prayed Him

to change a siren into a woman : that she should be a woman, a real woman, not only outwardly, in lines, in colouring, in body, but also in her soul, which should yearn in company with his for the same field, the same vine, the same earth ; enjoying the same sky, the same light : a woman who with the same heart, and the same voice as his, sings the same hymns to the same God.

For this hope, he bore with everything, the hot sun, the scorching sand, the endless march over lands of thirst, drinking more than once only the blackish slime obtained from the bellies of slaughtered camels. A hope mixed with fear, for the women grew weaker every day.

But when they had crossed the Lybian mountains, and the caravan had penetrated into the Fayyum, their features became animated again, their faces regained a little colour and life. Yet even when the caravan approached the Nile, and when, after many detours among the network of canals, it stopped, they still stayed in the palanquin, silent and motionless.

At dawn, beasts, baggage, servants and slaves were embarked on great rafts. The travellers followed, crossing the stream in boats. Mordecai had the palanquin carried to the foot of the mast, and sent his son to the stern, near the women. He sat in front, facing the Land of Goshen where, three thousand years ago, his ancestors, as unhappy as he, fugitives like himself, had suffered, and which they had left ■ set out for the promised Land. But they had wandered for forty years, separated from their goal. And he would in a few days reach the end of his journey.

The other boats stood out, black silhouettes, against a horizon that was at first leaden-hued, then became pale orange, gradually fading into a light green and, finally, into the sombre blue. Slowly, from a spot that seemed to have collected all the light of the sky, the sun rose, oval, giving birth to yellow shadows on the yellow and black ripples of the stream and surrounding with a halo masts, sails, things and people.

Mordecai arose :

" May the soul of everything living hallow Thy Name, oh Eternal One, our God, and may the breath of every being ever praise and exalt Thee.

" Though our mouths were as full of songs as the sea, our tongues of exultations as the waves, our lips as full of praise as the sun and the moon, our feet as swift as those of hinds, our hands spread

forth like the wings of the eagles in the sky, we would not be able to thank Thee and praise Thy Name, oh Lord, our God, and God of our Fathers, for the thousands and tens of thousands of the bounties that Thou hast bestowed upon our fathers and us. . . ."

But a cry from Jair stopped him.

And Mordecai saw, in the midst of the torn sides of the palanquin, his son pointing to the waters of the stream, where Ghela and her daughters, naked and singing, were swimming out to sea.

## THE ADULTERESS

By EDMOND FLEG

*Translated by L. Z. AND J. LEFTWICH*

Edmond Fleg, born 1874 in Geneva. Noted French poet, author and playwright. Joined the French army in 1914 as a volunteer. Went through the War, and was awarded the Croix de Guerre and the Legion d'Honneur. His poem, "The Wailing Wall," has appeared in English, translated by Humbert Wolfe. His "L'Enfant Prophète," "Ecoute Israel," "Le Psaume de la Terre promise" and "Moïse," all indicate his profound Jewish feeling. He has compiled a Jewish Anthology in French in three volumes, containing examples of Jewish thought through the centuries in all countries and languages. His plays, "Le Démon," "La Bête," "Le Trouble-fête," and "Le Juif du Pape" have been produced at the leading theatres in Paris and elsewhere. Ernest Bloch, the great Jewish composer, has written the music for his Opera, "Macbeth," after Shakespeare's play. Has translated several Yiddish writers, notably Shalom Aleichem.

His brother, Julian Flegenheimer, is a famous architect. Selected by the French Government as architect for the Courts of Justice in Paris, and won first prize in the competition for a plan for the League of Nations Palace in Geneva and the Geneva Central Railway station.

MIRIAM and Naomi were two sisters, in appearance very much alike.

Miriam's brow was white as the snows on the top of Mount Lebanon; Naomi's pale as the moon shining through the branches of the terebinth. Miriam's eyes gleamed between their jet black lashes, like gold of Pervaim; Naomi's seemed two pearls of amber at the heart of deepest night. Miriam's hair was russet like bread steaming in the baker's oven; Naomi's like the lessening glow of iron on the anvil of the blacksmith.

As twin palms swaying in the gardens of Jericho, as twin roses mirrored in the springs of Engadi, Miriam and Naomi were two sisters in appearance very much alike.

But within their bodies their souls were not alike. For in the home of her husband, Naomi kept pure, weaving wool or spinning

flax ; but in the very bed of her husband, Miriam was stained by guilty dreams and voluptuous desires.

This was in the days when the Temple, still standing on the top of Mount Moriah, was filled with the chants of matins and even-songs, and sent towards heaven from sacrificial fires its columns of smoke, balm and prayer.

Now one Sabbath eve, Jahir, the husband of Miriam, returned from the school-house, where he had all day long instructed the children in the reading of Holy Scripture, and in the fear of the Lord ; and as he entered his home it seemed to him that he heard departing footsteps in the rose garden.

Again, one morning during Passover, he had risen in order to envelop his shoulders with the silk blue-fringed praying shawl and to encircle his arm with the leathern thongs of the phylacteries ; and as he was bowed in prayer, uttering the Shema, he seemed to catch sight of a vanishing mantle in the rose garden.

Then in the late afternoon of the Day of Atonement, in an anguish of suspicion, he committed the sin of leaving the court of the Sanctuary before the lawful hour when three stars should proclaim from heaven the end of the fast and the beginning of Forgiveness. And lo, the door of his house was locked against him, and his wife Miriam delayed a long time before opening ; and he saw that her hand shook and that her veil, hurriedly fastened, sagged below her eyes, and trembled with her body.

Then running and shouting, he ransacked the house from cellar to roof.

The cellar was empty, the bed was smoothly made, the terrace roof deserted. But the spirit of jealousy panted in the heart of Jahir. And he struck Miriam and dragged her by the hair, roaring :

" Confess ! Confess ! "

And Miriam, under her torn veil, was silent.

At last he said icily :

" To-morrow, at the Temple, you shall drink the Water of the Ordeal. Be your body without taint, or be your flesh guilty, He will show it before all—the Eternal Who sees all."

The next day at dawn, Miriam fled to Naomi.

"Sister, I am lost ! He is set on making me drink the waters of Jealousy ! And I have sinned ! Ah ! that unerring brew, divinely prescribed, what poison it will be to my veins ! And how they will laugh—the women of Israel—as they point their fingers at my jaundiced face, my darkened eyes, my shrivelled breasts, my swelled belly, my rotting thighs ! And the stones, the stones ! I see them already, I feel them hurtle against my skin, against my bones—those stones of shame, those death-dealing stones ! those stones that shatter !"

And Naomi answered her and said :

"Since God created to hold our different souls similar bodies, may He pardon your body for my soul ; take my hyacinth veil and give me your veil of saffron ; take my girdle of silver and give me your girdle of gold. Who could recognise Naomi in the apparel of Miriam ? Neither the women of Israel, not the High Priest, nor even Jahir himself will possibly imagine that another has taken your place. And my stainless body, submitting to the ordeal, will ward off the retribution from yours."

In the court-yard of the Temple, the women of Israel stand waiting, holding stones in their hands. The High Priest advances, wearing his azure mitre, displaying the breastplate in which twelve precious stones sparkle, and engirded by the robe of the tinkling bells.

Under the apparel of Miriam, Naomi stands before him, side by side with Jahir.

He tears off her veil of saffron. He tears off her girdle of gold. He tears off the band which holds her hair in place. He tears away the embroidered tunic which hides her breasts, and covers her with a black shroud. He binds her hips with knotted cords of palm fibre. He places in her palm, without oil and without perfume, the offering of oat meal, the food of unclean beasts. On the parchment he writes the accursed words. Into the earthen cup he drops the parchment-engrossed words, and over the words of the parchment he pours water, mingled with dust. And he cries :

"Drink ! If your flesh has not sinned, may this brew be to it as honey and aromatics. But if falsehood was in your heart and trickery in your soul, and if your body is defiled by forbidden

kisses, let your eyes be darkened ! Let your breasts shrivel ! Let your arms wither, your belly swell ! Let your thighs rot ! And let the stones of shame and of death, in the name of the Eternal, shower upon you the malediction of men and the retribution of heaven ! ”

There was a great silence. And all eyes were turned upon her.

And she emptied the cup. Her brow remained white as the snows on the top of Mount Lebanon. And her eyes still shone between their jet-black lashes like the gold of Pervaim. And like a palm swaying in the gardens of Jericho, like a roe mirrored in the springs of Engadi, she remained pure and unharmed in the fragrance of her innocence.

And the women of Israel let the stones fall from their hands. And they surrounded Naomi, mistaking her for Miriam. And tearing the black shroud and untying the cords of palm fibre, they returned to her the saffron veil and the girdle of gold. And descending the stairs of David, and passing along by the Pool of Siloam, and crossing the streets and gates, and through the Yard of the Fullers, the Horse Market and the Fish Market, they escorted her with songs and praises to the house of Jahir, where Miriam was hidden in the agony of her sin and the terror of her remorse.

And while Jahir, who had stayed behind in the Temple, was offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving in the Great Hall, the two sisters spoke together in undertones :

“ Here is your veil of hyacinth.”

“ Here is your saffron veil.”

“ And here your girdle of silver.”

“ And here your girdle of gold.”

“ Naomi, Naomi, have you not taken back your innocence with your garments ? ”

“ No, Miriam, your fault is wiped out. Lo, with this kiss I place the pardon of God on your purified brow.”

“ Oh, Naomi, the breath of your kiss ! Has not your mouth drunk the waters of Justice ? Naomi, Naomi ! What odour mounts in me from your kiss ! May it, indeed, not be the odour of the retribution you warded off ? May not your mouth have brought me the inevitable contamination, the unaccomplished. curse ? ”

“ No, Miriam, no ! The Eternal ■ merciful. From this day

forth, for evermore, in our similar bodies our souls, too, are alike."

But Miriam was trembling when Jahir returned. She trembled when he threw himself on his knees before her. She trembled when he murmured :

"Forgive me, Miriam, my well beloved."

Suddenly, she felt her face grow jaundiced, her eyes darken in the sockets, her breasts shrivel, her arms wither, her belly swell and her thighs rot.

And Jahir watched her terror-stricken, and cried :

"Hasten ! Hasten ! Women of Israel ! And let the stones of shame and death, in the name of the Eternal, shower upon her head the malediction of men and the retribution of heaven !"

And thus were fulfilled the words of the Prophet, saying :

"Good and Evil, the eye of the Lord sees them everywhere."

## THE HERESY OF THE WATER TAPS

By JEAN RICHARD BLOCH

*Translated by CLIFTON P. FADIMAN*

Jean Richard Bloch, born in Paris, 1884. Fought through the War in the French Army. Wounded at the Marne, in Champagne, and at Verdun. Demobilised in 1919. In 1926 a re-opening of one of his war wounds threatened him with loss of sight, but he recovered.

Composed his first play at the age of seven. In 1910, when he was twenty-three, he had a play produced at the Odéon Theatre in Paris.

His great book "——& Co." was written between 1911 and 1914, and was about to be printed when the War broke out, and it was not published till 1917. Bloch corrected the proof-sheets in a War hospital, while suffering from several severe wounds. He revised it in 1925. His "Levy" is a book dealing with the time of the Dreyfus Affair. "La Nuit Kurde" has been described as a masterpiece. "Les Juifs Robinson" is an account of his travels in Palestine.

To Romain Rolland "——& Co." recalls the genius of Balzac. "I make bold to say without any reservations," he writes, "that here is the only French novel I know that is worthy ■ take its place among the masterpieces of the 'Human Comedy.' It is in the same tradition. The coupling of these names would be perilous to any other man, but the personality of Jean Richard Bloch is quite capable of standing the comparison."

It is a matter of common knowledge that eunuchs never become entirely free from certain perturbations peculiar to their sex. Similarly, if your leg has acquired the odious habit of itching and someone happens to cut it off, its wooden substitute will continue to itch—and you to scratch. The final exhaustion of your bank account does not necessarily kill a taste for truffled partridge. So with religion. . . .

These are truths derived from experience—and one should not ignore experience. Had the Archbishop of Paris reminded himself of this in time, he would not have allowed such agitation to manifest itself when the great Heresy of the Water Taps broke out. Nor would the Consistory of the Ministers of the Reformed

Church have allowed it to disturb their peace ; nor the Chief Rabbi of France. . . .

This ■ how the affair was described to me by the little rabbi, Israel Cohen, who officiated with neither glory nor profit at the oratory of Trocadéro Passy. The little rabbi, Israel Cohen, was modest—and quite unconscious of his modesty. Quite simply, over our bocks of Zimmer beer, he told me the astonishing story which, in his own words, follows.

Have you ever visited my oratory? . . . It's a perfect copy of the Hammam, with this difference in favour of the bath establishment : that at my place the furnace is never going. Though my little bit of a synagogue is only about as large as a wafer, ■ gets as chilly as a catacomb.

At first I had a *chazan* who managed to stand it three months before going into a fit complicated by acute bronchitis. The result was that I myself had to make a fire out of old newspapers before I could dare to take off my overcoat. But one day when I almost set fire to the Temple I decided to abandon this method. Besides, my supply of old newspapers was running out.

I adopted the habit of saying my prayers while polishing the glossy oak benches with a soft flannel rag. Under my breath I cursed the idiotic munificence of Raphael Weill, the banker, who founded and endowed this useless synagogue eight days before his death just to spite his three renegade sons. Think of the services I could have given in the Marais neighbourhood, where ten thousand pious Jewish families are crowded together without either air or synagogue.

The twenty-four consecutive hours I had to spend in that solitude during the holiday constituted an immurement far more dreadful than anything ever invented by the Catholic monks. I never saw the holidays approaching without a feeling of terror. And when I emerged without strength, voiceless and chilled, the elegant automobiles of my congregants bespattered the modest garments which were all my 190 francs a month allowed me.

I informed the Central Consistory of these details and asked to be transferred. Their reply intimated that I possessed a certain mental simplicity if I imagined that it was their business to see that rabbis were provided with congregations. Undoubtedly, they

said, M. de Rothschild ought to undertake to beat the drum up and down the Avenue Henri Martin just for the benefit of little Israel Cohen, a rabbi of twelve months' experience. They did not go so far as to say that I was entirely responsible for the difficulty, but they knew how to insinuate that there were certain devices commonly employed to lend the services a less austere appearance—devices which I had merely to avail myself of without asking anybody's permission.

This was just about the time when that fat rabbi from the East descended on Paris, you remember, the one who bragged so shamelessly and had such a purple neck. Remember him? Well, he brought along a complete scheme for the reform of the traditional services. The scheme had seventy different provisions, beginning with the recitation of the Pentateuch in blank verse and ending with a rearrangement of the women's benches so as to make them face the men's.

The officials of the Chief Rabbi closed their eyes less in horror than in acquiescence and the fellow opened up business not three hundred yards away from my little synagogue on the Rue Galilée, and what with his musical services on Sunday morning at the hour of the mass and his first communion for twelve-year-old bourgeoisie heiresses, he managed to draw a capacity crowd for six months. Downright disgusting mummery, I call it! I mention this detail merely to indicate that tendency toward change in religious customs which was to culminate in the Heresy of the Water Taps.

On the seventeenth day of May I was proceeding towards the Trocadéro, flourishing my stick gaily because—if you will excuse the professional image—the Avenue Kléber seemed to me like Zion crowned with flowers and singing in the light of a liquid silver Spring. I was happy, too, because I had changed my official stovepipe for a black straw hat. Just then—I think I'll have another beer—just then I saw a black frock coat plastered with a breastplate cravat of stiffly starched white cloth approaching me from across the Avenue. The person who inhabited the costume seemed to know me, for he accosted me without hesitation and held out his hand. He was a middle-aged man, quite rotund, and clean-shaven. He wore a black straw hat like mine, which he took off as he approached. I did not remember ever having met him.

He said, "Rabbi Israel Cohen, I believe?"

"The same," I replied, doffing my hat. He introduced himself. "I am Pastor Thomas Morin, minister of the Calvinist Reformed Church in the Rue Boissière. Delighted to meet you, my dear young colleague."

The words were accompanied with a somewhat ambiguous smile. I returned his greeting politely and waited for his next words. He put on his hat, rubbed his hands and placed himself at my left.

"Would it inconvenience you if we walked together a bit?" ■■ asked. I had no objection and so the two black frock coats proceeded side by side along the Avenue. He promptly broached his subject, rolling his ebony stick between the palms of his hands, and looking at me now and then with a sidewise glance.

"My dear young colleague—colleague in God——" he added with what I thought was a rather satirical smile, "we labour, do we not, under a common, or shall I say, a similar burden. Allow me to express the pleasure that the New Testament feels in meeting the Old. You are young and modest. We have heard quite a little about your courage. And that you know Hebrew and any number of Arabic and Syriac jargons. But you will grant all that has not enabled you to make much of an impression on your parishioners."

I did not feel called upon to reply to this all-too-clear insinuation. This fat individual really annoyed me. He continued, rubbing his hands with great pleasure: "Grant me that, Rabbi Cohen! As far as I am concerned I admit the same difficulty and, in a little while, the Abbé Joseph Patard will make a similar confession relative to his own flock."

I stopped short.

"The Abbé Patard?——"

"Yes, he is waiting for us at the Museum of Comparative Ethnography," declared the minister simply, giving me a side glance that felt as if he were shoving me with his elbow. "He trusts that you will honour us by giving us a few moments, Rabbi Cohen."

Well, you can understand that the whole thing took me quite by surprise. At the Seminary in the Rue Vauquelin we had learned all but two things—how to reawaken faith and how to behave in the face of another religion. I tried to carry it off by affecting an arrogant composure, but I felt that I was turning very red—a weakness of my complexion which I haven't been able to get rid

of yet; and you know there's no idiocy ■ man will not agree to in order to excuse the colour of his ears.

"I shall be glad to accompany you, Monsieur . . . Monsieur Morin."

"Fine. That is what I told the great Abbé Patard, but he would not believe me. These Catholic priests see obstacles at every turn."

Well, when we entered the Trocadéro this stoutish clergyman had not yet done with his compliments nor I with my amazement. And there was a tall, lanky priest waiting for us, engaged in examining the antiquities of Yucatan. The contours of his shoulder blades caught the cassock at the bend. He turned, took off his hat solemnly, and then lowered his sharp nose till it pointed directly to his shoe tips.

I imagine the Calvinist minister was quite amused at our discomfort, for he caressed his belly with a sort of slow enjoyment. Finally he started the conversation. It was agreed that he should be our spokesman.

"Rabbi Israel Cohen has consented to come, Father Patard, on my assuring him that we are to consider only topics likely to affect the future of the three faiths we stand for in our endeavours to benefit the souls of our parishioners, let us hope, and to diffuse more widely the doctrines of love, brotherhood . . . grace . . . salvation."

The last two nouns seemed to trouble him for a moment, but he finally got them out and turned to me a face literally beaming with guilelessness. The Abbé Patard raised his head with such a dry mechanical gesture that I thought I heard his vertebrae creak. He tried to manufacture a smile out of the thousand little wrinkles that crimped his skin around the nose. I really couldn't say whether the colour of his face was usually as yellow as it was just then.

"Yes, Monsieur Cohen, you may well be amazed at our meeting. But the fact ■ that a great danger threatens the faith——"

■ The various faiths of our faithful, Monsieur Cohen."

It was on the tip of my tongue to reply that any problem affecting a congregation could not possibly be of much interest to me, but I restrained myself just in time and merely bowed assent. The priest looked around uneasily. Then with short quick steps,

he led us between the rear wall and a huge glass case entirely filled with images of Mexican deities. It was here, in the shadow and under the eyes of a gigantic Aztec idol, that our conventicle took place.

You know that my nature is neither over-imaginative nor over-enthusiastic. As ■ the case with the majority of my young colleagues, clarity and philology interest me far more than legend. Yet, my dear friend, will you believe me when I say that at that moment the little twenty-two-year-old rabbi felt himself standing on Mount Sinai? I could not help smiling at the emotion that stirred these worshippers of the Golden Calf. Involuntarily I recalled Isaiah's words in the nineteenth chapter: "And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians : and they shall fight everyone against his brother." You will admit that there was something amusing in the idea of this young man being invited as a third by the two great enemy denominations of Western Europe.

Quite brusquely, the Abbé began to speak : "No doubt you are acquainted with Madame la Comtesse de Hauterive—or at least with her family?"

I will confess that I was entirely unaware of the existence of this lady. The clergyman, who had been watching me added : "You will identify her better, Monsieur Cohen, by her bapt—by her birth name : she is the daughter of Monsieur Julius Mayer, the banker, who owns that large new mansion—The Ranelagh."

"And mother of the wife of Monsieur Pelletier, the banker, who belongs to your denomination," continued Father Patard, not very graciously, turning to my frock-coated colleague. Here was a ray of light. I had completely forgotten the interwoven genealogies of this Frankfort family which had sought, in turn, money and titles of nobility. I ventured astutely: "Is Mademoiselle Pelletier thinking of contracting a union that would bring her back to one of the faiths of her forefathers?"

I was rewarded with an icy look from the minister of Calvin, which discouraged me from further jesting.

"No, Monsieur Cohen, The matter we have ventured to disturb you about is far more serious. This family depends on our threefold jurisdiction. You especially, sir (he was addressing me), can do a great deal through the influence that you must legitimately exercise over Madame Mayer, mother of Madame de Hauterive and grandmother of Madame Pelletier."

Why should I disillusion him by telling him that I had never even seen the good lady? After waiting a moment for a sign or a reply, he continued: "Now, you are probably aware that it is in this family——"

My countenance was quite impassive.

"You are not unaware that this family is the origin of this ridiculous and blasphemous fashion which may well assume, unless we take precautions, an inordinate importance."

As you can easily imagine, I was burning with curiosity, but I merely heaved an eloquent sigh.

And so I learned of the disturbances which during the last two weeks had been agitating the aristocratic apartments of the Avenues Kléber, Victor Hugo, Henri Martin, Trocadéro and others in that charming neighbourhood. The Comtesse de Hauterive had never really been a believer. But she displayed all the appearance of the most rigorous devotion. That is, until the Abbé Patard was appointed priest of her parish, the spineless fellow who had the misfortune to take his office seriously. He threatened to refuse the Comtesse absolution unless she made her real conduct and thought conform to this outward show. Well, war broke out between the two and one day——

"One day" (these are the clergyman's words, more or less) "when the Comte after being announced, entered the bathroom where the Comtesse his wife had been shutting herself up most of the day for nearly a week, he found her kneeling and praying—wasn't that it?" the minister asked, turning to the priest with a gesture in which the blackest malice was masked by tender condolence. The Abbé Patard nodded gruffly.

"He found her, then, kneeling and praying before a crucifix—you will pardon this detail, Monsieur Cohen?"

"Quite. Quite, Monsieur Morin," I said, "I am listening."

"A crucifix which hung on the wall of the bathroom just over the mixing tap—that's right, isn't it, Father Patard?—of the bathtub. The Comte couldn't help remarking to the Comtesse—but only in jest, gentlemen, only in jest—that she seemed to be addressing her prayers to the water tap rather than to the crucifix. Whereupon without replying the Comtesse—with a gesture which you will understand, Monsieur Cohen, I cannot mention

without a shudder—rose, removed the image of the Saviour, and, smiling scornfully, deposited it on the dressing table. Then she returned to the bathtub and again set herself in an attitude of prayer—wasn't that how it was, Father Patard?—her knees on the marble floor, before the lone mixing tap."

My mouth must have been opened as wide as my straw hat.

"The Comte, of course, was shocked; but, assuming that his wife was joking, he began to point out the impropriety of this action, when she stood up—the Comtesse is still considered quite beautiful and very triking—when she stood up and interrupted him petulantly. She declared briefly that, one after another, all the religions she had tried had deceived her; that their priests lived in a perpetual betrayal of the principles they expounded; that the ministers of the religion which had commanded her faith before her marriage lacked even the slightest dignity—you will excuse me if the desire to be exact puts on my lips accusations of which I personally disapprove—in fact, were nothing but wretched—here followed a word of Hebrew slang which the Comte did not catch——"

I opened my mouth and allowed the word to escape mechanically: "*Schnorrers?*"

The triumphant satisfaction that spread over the seemingly contrite expression of the clergyman made me curse my naïveté and this awful blunder. I suppose I must have turned scarlet from the roots of my hair to the soles of my feet. This diabolical clergyman bowed and said sweetly: "You probably know better than I, Monsieur Cohen."

I could have strangled him. And then he continued with his false air of frankness: "She added that the priests of the creed she had adopted since her marriage to Monsieur Hauterive had offended her no less; that some of them lived in a sensual debauchery while others aspired merely to a profitable domination over the minds of others. But naturally I don't even wish to repeat such idle talk—and a great deal more that she said on the same subject," he added, observing with the corner of his eye the restless uneasiness of the Abbé Patard.

"It will be enough to know that besides these reasons—really not reasons at all—Madame de Hauterive alleged others which cannot help making one ponder over the state of decadence into which public morals have fallen."

I don't know why at that moment he should have cast a severe glance at me.

"She declared that, after all, the various religions contradicted each other; that she had no reasons to believe one in preference to another; that although everyone talked about God, no one had yet proved that he existed, and the disorder of the world rather argued the contrary; and that the only inference she had derived from observing the universal conduct of men and women was that they were all in quest of ease and pleasure.

"As for herself, she declared, her pleasure did not lie where one might suppose; and at this point she introduced " (it was still the clergyman who spoke) "several remarks most uncivil to her husband, the Comte, and which assuredly can have become the property of public gossip only through a devious route " (this to the priest).

"Under these circumstances, she had decided to pay no attention to anything outside of her own ease and would reserve her reverence exclusively for those marvellous mysteries which enabled her to surround herself with the comfort she sought. In this she claimed that she was merely complying with the fashion of her own social world and at the same time stripping it of the hypocrisy with which it was usually disguised.

"Finally suiting the action to the word, she began to pray to the water tap once more, then walked past the stupefied Comte to the electric light switch, clasped her hands, bent down and touched it with her lips. Finally, on bended knees, she addressed a fervent prayer to the radiator. When the wretched Comte emerged from his bewilderment with the idea of forcing her to rise she was already withdrawing with dignity and giving orders to summon the servants. Now, are there any other details you might like to know, Monsieur Cohen?"

You can judge the state of amazement into which this story plunged me.

But I had no time to stop there, for the Abbé Joseph Patard had now drawn himself up and in a voice of thunder, which he tried vainly to soften, he proclaimed, pointing his index-finger at the clergyman:

"Know furthermore that these abominations might have remained for ever concealed in the bosom of this impious woman if

her own daughter, the wife of the banker Pelletier, perverted by the abjuration wherefor her parent and she herself will have to account before the tribunal of Divine Justice, had not hastened to follow her example——”

“If you please !” interrupted the pastor. . . .

“. . . . and if this example had not amid her own circle met with a success a thousand times regrettable for you, Monsieur Morin, and, I hope for the salvation of those sinful souls ! ”

“That’s only too true, but——”

The pastor would not surrender. And at this point the priest lifted his two large bony hands, open wide, towards the sky : “What is it we see about us ? Blasphemy, heresy, outrage going back generation after generation and striking the white hairs of Madame Julius Mayer, to whom our Church owes so much, and yours undoubtedly no less, Monsieur Cohen ; from there, spreading in all directions, it strikes the neighbouring homes, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman, as well as those subject to other religions ! We are already losing our faithful by the score. Some of them brutally break all bonds connecting them with the religion of their fathers ; others lean more moderately towards the heresy. But everywhere one encounters nothing but tolerance for these monstrosities. Even the most honest are merely content to smile. Brochures which the impious zeal of Madame de Hauterive causes to be printed are already circulating. They are being translated into various languages and we hear that abroad, in Spain, in England, even in Berlin, enthusiastic support will be given to this lunacy.”

He tucked up his cassock vehemently and took out of his pocket a sheaf of little pale blue pamphlets, like those you may have seen afterwards. This was the first one I ever set my eyes on. The cover bore this legend :

## FAITH IN THE ALL-POWERFUL FORCES

THE “ ALL-IN-ALL ”

OR

*New Dogma of the Life and  
Death of Mankind*

NEW LIGHT  
 ON  
 the true succession of prophets from  
 Sakya Mouni to Edison  
 THE PRINCIPLES OF ALL THINGS  
 for the first time REVEALED and MADE MANIFEST  
 by a Society of the Faithful  
 Science and Religion Henceforth  
 Reconciled

Followed by  
 FIFTY-TWO acts of devotion to the POWERS OF  
 THE HEARTH  
 (Here was placed a design of a radiant water-tap)  
 PARIS, MECCA OF THE SCIENCES  
 AND POWERS MCMXII

*Ten centimes the copy*

And the slender column opened to that chant you may have  
 heard so many times since :

O Fire, I revere you, Fire,  
 You are the sun and you are God,  
 You move about within our homes,  
 Deprived of you, O Fire, I die.

O Water, principle of all,  
 O Power in which all things rest,  
 Absolution, holy purity !  
 Great Polymorphe, shadow or light.

Light, mastered force, etc. . . .

You may well wonder whether at first I believed a single word  
 of these mad tales. I asked myself what sort of madmen these  
 were. But my two colleagues gave me no time to answer my own  
 question. They interrupted each other with increasing heat.

Finally I gathered that the priest had hastened to the Archbishop, where his revelations, corroborated by testimony from three or four other sources, had stirred up considerable agitation. He had been commissioned to enter into negotiations with the representatives of cults similarly threatened. The pastor's experience had been practically identical.

The purpose of our conference, then, was to ascertain the extent of the damage. I foresaw with horror the moment when I would have to confess publicly my inability to estimate it—and to give the all-too-excellent reason. I was already cursing the ignorance in which the carelessness of the Central Consistory had placed me when our conversation suddenly took an unexpected turn.

The Abbé was engaged in a sort of harangue in the course of which he was endeavouring to depict the idolatry of these men and women training their children to follow the electric wires affixed to the walls of the apartment, to genuflect every seven steps and to recite appropriate prayers—all of which is, I admit, perfectly ridiculous. But he had the misfortune to conclude with a figure which though very happy from an artistic point of view was, nevertheless, an unpleasant mistake. It was something like this—the deuce ! I can't seem to remember !—oh, yes :

"Well, gentlemen, it seems extremely urgent that we take action. The spirit of evil raises its head once more—ahem !—Madame de Hauterive, née Mayer " (I swallowed it) " desires to create a schism—a new reform movement. Against this new Calvin let us summon a new Ignatius Loyola ! "

You will agree with me that these words were not—between ourselves—very tactful or appropriate. But the Abbé was a born sermoniser. The pastor caught fire. At the mention of reform he held his breath and swelled like a pudding ; at the mention of Calvin he turned scarlet ; but when Loyola was named he jumped a foot in the air and jammed on his straw hat. I followed his example. He cried out sharply :

"Papist ! What have you to do with our great Calvin ? You and your whole Church are not good enough to wash the feet of this gentleman's Jewish heiresses ! "

"Sir ! " cried the priest.

"Idolater ! Simoniac ! Bigot ! "

"Rebel ! Blasphemer ! "

I did not stay to hear any more, but departed hastily. The

noise had attracted the attention of the guard, who was asleep on a chair near the entrance. As I passed by, the good gendarme asked me : " What's going on ? "

I gave myself the quite gratuitous pleasure of answering him : " Nothing much. The Four Gospels are merely having it out with the Apocrypha."

I have no idea what these words could have meant to him, for he dashed to the scene of the fray immediately. I have never seen my interlocutors again. Coming out of the place I asked myself whether I had not been the spectator of a ridiculous nightmare.

But I had to accept the facts. You recollect the progress of this extraordinary invention ; the middle class neighbourhood contaminated after the pseudo-aristocratic quarter ; the Plaine Monceau and the Trinity behind the Bois and Champs Elysées ; the heresy finally dying at the threshold of districts where the bathtub is unknown, where one must work for one's daily bread and pay the collector for water.

You know, as well as I do, of those people who turned their pleasure trips into pilgrimages ; great modern palaces transformed into temples where the rites of Steam Heat were celebrated on Mondays, where every evening before dining, they sang, standing bareheaded, the song of the Wire Filament Bulb, where they celebrated those mysterious and possibly disgusting mysteries of the Low Pressure Douche, which the police had vainly endeavoured to investigate.

And you recollect the impost publicly placed on the interiors of these household gods. And the fabulous prices attained in a few weeks by copper, aluminium, and nickel—metals declared fully as sacred as gold by the votaries of the new religion—and the particular devotion to Our Lady of the Four Cylinders, with the little altar erected two years ago in the middle of the Avenue de la Grande Armée to the demi-goddesses called Spark Plugs.

And all the disgusting affectations which revealed the decay of the modern soul—those ambiguous gestures intended as salutation to the Elevator whenever one passes before the cage of this new god—and those electric switches of cut glass set in gold, before which the tongue of a little electric spark quivers night and day.

As for myself, good fortune sent me to Smyrna the following

year. When I came back to France after an absence of ten years that was the state in which I found the country.

For faith decays to make way for a new faith. Belief must crop out somehow. When men, decadent and barren of ideals, reject all obligations, they come inevitably to adore their hip bath.

But what do you think of the conversation with my priest and my clergyman? Do you know that there was nothing to prevent the interview from becoming celebrated in ecclesiastical history under the name *Council of the Trocadéro*, with a zinc engraving of myself in the school text books?

But it was preordained that the name Israel Cohen should not become famous just then. A lovely name, nevertheless—I have dreamed for a long time of making it illustrious, like Maimonides. Well, what would you have? I was born thirty years too soon. Our day belongs to the independent virtues.

Please don't hesitate too long about using that bell and let's have some more of this dark beer. I have become as the sands of Egypt after the seven lean kine. . . .

## THE POOR JEWS

By ANDRÉ MAUROIS

Translated by R. O. HEER

André Maurois, born 1885 at Elboeuf, Normandy, where his parents who had lived in Alsace, settled when Alsace became German after 1870. His first book "The Silence of Colonel Bramble," wittily describes his experiences as an interpreter with the British Army in France during the War. He created a stir with his "Ariel, the Life of Shelley," and his succeeding books established him in the front rank of modern writers.

"You *must* find a bed for her," Mr. Kahn said to Doctor Rosenthal.

The doctor lifted his arms and shrugged his shoulders. He wore horn-rimmed spectacles, which he took off and polished when he was worried.

"I *demand* that a bed be found for her," repeated Mr. Kahn with the authority of the timid. . . . "She has been recommended to me by several friends; she is very poor and there will be a child coming in a few days."

"It is against the rules of the hospital," the doctor said in a tone of annoyance. . . . "She is not Jewish."

He took off his spectacles and wiped them.

"Who founded this hospital?" asked Mr. Kahn. "I paid for everything: the building, the material, the staff. . . . I can change the rules if I wish. . . . She is not Jewish, but she is in need . . . that is enough."

"There are many in need," the doctor said, bitterly, "but as they are not princesses, the rules are not changed in their favour. . . . I know this one. . . . I have sad reason to know her. . . . She is the daughter of General Atnikov, who was the Governor of the Province during the Kishinev pogrom. Her father allowed hundreds of Jews to be butchered, did not send one single gendarme to defend them."

"That is one more reason to be kind to his daughter," said

Mr. Kahn angrily. "We shall show her that Jews are not heartless."

Doctor Rosenthal ceased his protests as soon as he had Princess Baratinsky in his ward. She was pretty, sweet and grateful. The revolution and her exile had made her timid. She had had to fly from Russia on horseback, behind one of her uncles. Her father had been killed. In Paris she had lived a few months by selling her jewellery, then she had married Baratinsky who was just as poor as she was, and she had obtained a situation as a saleswoman in a little shop, at starvation wages. She had become pregnant at the very worst moment. Without Kahn, to whom she had been recommended by friends, God knows what would have become of her.

"Doctor," she said. "You will let me scream, won't you? When I am hurt, I like to scream."

Rosenthal smiled. She had disarmed him. Besides, everyone in the hospital loved the little princess. Her nurse, Mlle. Esther, knitted nighties for the baby. In the evening, Prince Baratinsky, who was a taxi-driver, came to see her and sat beside her bed. She leaned towards him and, speaking low, told him a thousand tender foolish nothings that made him laugh. Sometimes she said thoughtfully: "You cannot imagine, Pierre, how good they are to me. You know, when I think of the past I am filled with remorse. . . . How unjust we were, we Russians, towards the Jews. . . . My poor father . . ."

When her husband had left and she could not sleep, she spread some cards on the covers, and told her fortune.

"Well? Are the cards favourable?" asked Mlle. Esther gaily, finding her dreaming over the cards.

But the little princess shook her head. She believed in cards.

The hospital was scrupulously clean; the white walls curved to meet the ceilings, making the microbe nests vulnerable. Dr. Rosenthal, a crank for disinfectants, knew his work. Accidents were rare in his hospital, almost unknown.

"We have the best statistics in all Paris," said Mr. Kahn, rubbing his hands together. The confinement of the little princess was difficult, but without danger. She screamed a lot and demanded chloroform, which Rosenthal refused to give,

belonging to the school that believes in the useful influence of pain. The child was a fair and rosy boy, too strong for such a frail mother.

Mlle. Esther was stupefied when, three days after the confinement, the patient's temperature rose. In the morning the thermometer showed 101, in the evening 103. The patient was hot and complained of pains everywhere.

"Doctor," Mlle. Esther said, when they had moved away from the bed, "Doctor, I don't like it. . . . It is a bad business. . . . As soon as Mr. Kahn brought her here, I was troubled."

Rosenthal took off his spectacles, took out his handkerchief and polished them.

"A bad business?" he said. "How? What could it be? . . . She cannot have become infected. Where could she have got the germs?"

He was never to know where the little princess had got the germs of puerperal infection, but, without question she had got them, for her temperature rose, ceaselessly. At first she made little of it. She talked of a mild fever. Then the obvious uneasiness of those around her affected her. She called for her husband.

It was difficult to find the prince who, in order to earn more money, was now working at night. At last he came and sat down by the bed. He was tall, with a shaven head, with the curious ease of an officer of the Guards. He had not had time to take of his taxi-driver's cape and cap which gave him a military appearance.

"What is wrong?" he asked Rosenthal impatiently. "What sort of treatment have you given her? . . . Something must be done. . . . Is there no serum?"

"There is a serum," Rosenthal said, anxiously and irritated. "I have made injections. . . . They mostly succeed. . . . But here. . . nothing. . . . Perhaps. . . ."

The little princess was now in such a high fever that she no longer recognised anybody. She crumpled the sheets in her hands and said:

"The Jack of Clubs. . . . The Jack of Clubs. . . ."

Once only she looked at her husband and said, tenderly:

"Pierre, the poor Jews. . . ."

Towards evening Mr. Kahn himself arrived, accompanied by Mlle. Samson, the directress, respectful and uneasy.

"It has been explained to me," he said severely to Rosenthal. "... It is a disgrace . . . in my hospital. . . . For which I gave you authority to draw funds on me without limit. . . . It is a disgrace. . . ."

Rosenthal polished his spectacles and did not reply.

"We must bring down the greatest obstetrician," said Mr. Kahn. "The greatest. I want to save this little one. . . . We shall save her, Prince," he said to the husband.

The doctor telephoned to one of his old teachers and the great man came, bringing a friend with him. They, of course, approved of everything that Rosenthal had done, led Kahn away from the husband, and told him that there was no hope.

About midnight, when they were all standing round the bed of the little princess, she fell into a violent fit of delirium. Raised on the pillows, her pretty face red with fever, her hair dishevelled, she screamed. Suddenly she stopped, seized her husband's hand, leaned towards him and whispered :

"D'you see, Pierre ? . . . All those Jews ! . . . They must be burnt. . . ."

He tried to quieten her and looked at the others as if asking them for forgiveness, but she went on, earnestly, passionately :

"Go, call my father ! Tell him everything. . . . My father is Governor of the Province. . . . Tell him to throw all these Jews to the peasants. . . . Have them hung up on the wayside trees. . . . That one, Pierre, the one with the spectacles . . . kill him . . . kill all the Jews !"

Her voice rose, sharp, anguished. Stunned, Kahn, Rosenthal and Mlle. Esther stood round the bed of the dying girl, looking at each other with eyes filled with tears.

## THE TRAVELLER

By BENJAMIN CRÉMIEUX

*Translated by R. O. HEER*

Benjamin Crémieux, born 1888, in Narbonne. Was Professor at the French Institute in Florence at the outbreak of the War. Joined the French army as a volunteer. Served in the Infantry and was three times wounded. After the War, was appointed an official of the French Foreign Office. His first novel, "*Le Premier de ■ Classe*," won instant recognition, and he was awarded the Prix Blumenthal. Translated into French, Pirandello's "*Six Characters in Search of an Author*." One of the leading French critics. His "*XX Siècle*," a collection of essays, deals with living French authors and gives a picture of French literature in the present century.

A queer fellow ! . . . A light suit—of the very best material, and, as I could see, made by a good tailor—a soft felt hat, a pair of thick kid gloves stuffed into his pocket, an attaché case, in short, rigged out as a traveller in a train de luxe should be. And yet, three days' beard, fingernails in mourning, and his brown shoes covered with ten different layers of dust, and the soles thick with mud.

I had noticed him before, in the crowd, as I got out of the train on to the platform at the Gare de l'Est, and I had been struck by the odd contrast between his attire and his bearing. . . .

And now, in a white wrap, under the protecting and gesticulating shadow of the hairdresser, isolated from the rest of the saloon by the clicking of the scissors above my head, I could study in the mirror at my ease this odd traveller, waiting his turn. He had waved away the papers and magazines that first the cashier and then the manager had offered him. Nor did he seek to relieve the monotony of waiting by watching the people coming and going along the rue de Strasbourg, through the wide open door. He stared straight in front of him, without moving his head or body, except, now and again, to look first at his watch, then the clock in the shop, and then the station clock.

An attendant suddenly sang out :

"That will be twelve-fifty for Monsieur ! . . ."

The traveller started. He darted a quick glance to the right, to the left, then straight ahead, like a man who has suddenly realised that he is in a place where he had not meant to be, and is looking for a way of escape. Three times his eyes met mine in the mirror in which I was observing him. Three glances : three burns, as if the mirror, turned magnifying glass, had caught the rays of the sun ; or rather, shall I say, the feeling of three flashes of his eyes—of his eyes or of his soul.

I could no longer conceal my curiosity. I stared at him openly. And he, too, fixed his eyes on me, and did not remove them. Now and again, the hairdresser bending over my chin or ears would hide us from each other, as if we had suddenly been whirled into a tunnel. Then we were out again, and when the mirror again revealed to me the reflection of the traveller, I surprised a queer smile disappearing from his lips—smile or sneer ?—

When I left it was he who took my place in the chair, that was still warm with my sitting in it.

I love June mornings in Paris, when the sun has not yet dried the damp streets and sidewalks. On the café terraces a few solitary customers are dipping their brioches in their café au lait, and round about them the chairs are still piled up on the tables, and the waiters are busy with sawdust, water and polish.

It is no longer the Paris that is swallowing up the outskirts and defiling the banks of the Seine with greasy papers and empty tin cans, with jagged edges like exploded bombs. . . . To me, arriving from Montfermeil, it is the country that is invading the town. The leafy tree on the boulevard is only a luckless brother of the trees that line the avenue leading to my country house. . . .

Autumn is on the way—the long vacation at the sea-side, the casino, the little harbour, and the ebb and flow of the tide—with its enforced rest and idleness. But my real holidays are these weeks in late spring, which I spend at my house in the country, left me by my father. Every year, at the beginning of June, I install myself there with my wife and my little ones. I leave them each morning; I return to them each evening. My

day in Paris pivots round my villa, and my big, quiet garden. The morning tennis racket flings me like a shuttle-cock over my day's work with so much force that I hover ■ day without descending. This buoyancy ■ a delight to me. So is this liberty, which I do not misuse, which I have not the least intention of abusing, but which gives back to me the sense of being eighteen. If only my wardrobe and pocketbook had been as well filled then as they are to-day ! . . .

Lunch at a restaurant—for choice the grill room, returning to the queer little bistrot of old times—it is so delightful only because of the dinner that will follow in the evening, in the garden, beside the rose bushes, seated between two curly heads, facing their mother, who in spite of being the mother of two and approaching her thirtieth birthday, with a war separation of five years, is still very much the girl, "petite Lucienne." . . . In the solitude of noon, I love to think of my happiness—thirteen kilometres suffice to furnish the correct perspective. The match hisses as it drops on the banana peel, the cigar is perfect. At such moments I am conscious of the deep rhythm that fills my adult life, safe from the anxieties and errors of adolescence, emerging unharmed from the perils of the war, and still a long way, thank God, from old age.

"Taxi !"

The driver cuts a circle round the traffic policeman and pulls up by the kerb, against the hairdressing saloon.

Nothing new in the papers. . . . Ah ! The exchange ! Gilt-edged, railroads, oil. How do rubber shares stand ? . . . Not very bright. . . . Rubber quotations. . . . Pedang. . . . Brr. . . . What a fall ! The paper remarks : "Rubber values are declining. The English press points out that stocks are in excess of a whole year's consumption requirements and that never has there been greater need of co-operation on the part of the producers."

How about the season at Deauville I have promised Lucille. . . . Can I afford it now ?

Let me see. I must calculate. My fountain pen. My note book . . . "appointment at 9.30 with Vanderkampff from Roubaix at the Hôtel Doré, Boulevard Montmartre." . . . Where the devil is the man taking me to. . . . Driving along the Champs Elysées to get to the Boulevard Montmartre from the rue de Strasbourg!

"Driver——"

"Sir——"

"Why do you take me this way?"

"It's the quickest way to the rue Boissière."

"Rue Boissière! Why rue Boissière? Did I say rue Boissière?"

"Certainly, Sir. 53 rue Boissière."

"That's strange. I have never known anyone in that street. I can't imagine what I must have been thinking about. . . . Take me to the Hôtel Doré, Boulevard Montmartre. . . . And hurry, please, or I shall be late. . . ."

How could I make such a slip, how could I tell him to go to the rue Boissière, when born Parisian that I am I had only been there about four times in the whole of my life!

And yet I feel anxious about those rubber shares. . . . I must keep calm, and act at once so that I don't lose too much. I'm not the only one whose speculations have gone wrong!

"Driver."

"Sir."

"Before you take me to the Hôtel Doré, ■ to 26bis rue du Sentier. . . ."

In my offices in the rue du Sentier, everyone is at his post. The smooth and methodic bustle of the ant-hill, punctuated by the tapping of the typewriters, soothes me.

"No, Cazin, I haven't time to look at the mail. I'll be back in an hour."

I took the little list out of my drawer, in which I keep written down all the securities I possess, my whole fortune, including my spinning mill and the house at Montfermeil.

"Driver, Hôtel Doré."

Let me look at these rubber shares. . . . How could I have got tied up in such a muddle!

Well, if that isn't the limit. . . . Not a word of rubber shares in the whole of the list. And I keep such a careful account of all my operations on exchange!

"Driver!—Stop!"

I must telephone my bank! The lady at the bar smiles at me: "Yes, sir, the telephone is at the end of the passage, on the right, next to the wash-room."

"The manager hasn't arrived yet."

"Is the manager of the exchange department there?"

"I will put you through to him."

"But, my dear sir, we have never made any transactions in rubber for you. . . . Your stocks could not possibly stand better than they do now."

Am I dreaming or am I going mad? First of all this rue Boissière. . . . Now these rubber shares. . . . And it isn't very hot. What did we eat last night, that might have disagreed with me? My forehead is quite clammy. . . .

Of course, Vanderkamp had not waited for me. He had left a note excusing himself, and asking me to meet him in the afternoon.

But those rubber shares. How terrible if they should go on falling to-day! . . . Though what does it matter to me, if they do. I haven't a single rubber share. . . .

I stop at the end of the Boulevard Poissonnière, repeating to myself: "I haven't a single rubber share, not a single one——" People passing by stare at me.

Lucienne will chaff me when I tell her about this hallucination. There was something queer about her this morning. We had almost quarrelled. She seemed to be pitying me. Am I then to be pitied?

Ten o'clock already. What a strange morning! And that queer fellow at the hairdresser's. The way in which he stared at me—the hunted look in his eyes. . . .

At twenty-past ten I was in the Gare de l'Est outside the booking office for the suburban trains.

It was futile to argue. I was certain about it. . . . Lucienne was deceiving me. If I hurried I might catch her red-handed. The wretch! I am going to kill her!

There is no doubt about it! They have been meeting all the winter in the apartment in the rue Boissière. Now they are actually meeting in Montfermeil! And to discover all this at the same time—my love ruined, my fortune gone owing to the fall in rubber shares, to see everything crumble in an hour. . . . Perhaps it would be better to kill myself at once, not to wait any longer.

The awful certainty of it. To-morrow I would have to sell

my spinning mill to pay my losses, to-day I would have to destroy my home with my own hands.

Noisy-le-Sec. Should I get off, should I stop here? No, I cannot bear this treachery any longer. I shall kill her. . . .

Bondy. Another two kilometres! At Raincy, instead of taking the electric tram, I shall jump into the solitary taxi outside the station, and in five minutes I shall be at Montfermeil . . . le Raincy. . . .

The train had not quite stopped yet when the traveller I had seen in the hairdressing saloon jumped out of the compartment next to mine, rushed to the exit, and got into the taxi, which immediately lurched forward at top speed.

I had to take the electric tramway. I was not myself any more. I was boiling with rage and I behaved as if in a trance. I was obsessed: Avenge myself! Kill her!

A sudden lurch and the tram stopped. The trolley had left the wire, and it had startled us like a flash of lightning or a shot. What had happened? I seemed to be waking up.

What am I doing in Montfermeil at this unusual hour? And my appointments for this afternoon with Vanderkamp! Lucienne would be surprised and glad to see me returning for lunch. She would forgive me immediately my ill humour of this morning.

—Les Marronniers. The terminus.

The traveller's taxi is standing in the avenue that leads to my house. There is a crowd in the avenue. Lucienne is there. I feel afraid.

I go up to her. . . A forester and a labourer are holding the traveller by the wrists. Lucienne cries out as she sees me. Is the nightmare beginning again?

Lucienne, Lucienne, what has happened?

"This wretch has just killed his wife in the villa facing ours——"

The rue Poissonnière, the rubber shares, the unfaithful wife, it had all been the lot of this man, who had tried to unburden himself on to me. . . . The lurch of the tram, my sudden awakening, coincided with the murder, which had liberated me.

The traveller. . . . Who knows what unknown traveller is slumbering in the depths of each of us?

## EASTER IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL

By JOSEPH KESSEL

*Translated by R. O. HEER*

Joseph Kessel, born 1898, in the Argentine. Regarded as one of the hopes of French literature. His first novel, "La Steppe rouge," published 1923 attracted great attention. The Academy awarded him in 1927 the Grand Prix for Literature. He visited Palestine in 1926.

IN one of the poorest, humblest and most over-populated quarters of Paris, there is great joy this week. The stranger who passes along these streets, courts and blind alleys, that form a labyrinth behind the Town Hall, and is ignorant of the ethnic composition of the capital, may find it strange, even incongruous, that this quarter should suddenly have taken on an Oriental festive appearance.

On the doorsteps, on the slippery pavements, long-bearded men stand about in groups, gesticulating and conversing. There is an expression of repose, of calm, of joy on their pronounced features. The women, with strangely melancholy and fervent expressions, are going about their work with an unusually joyful light in their dark eyes. The children, mostly handsome and vivacious, cleaner and better-dressed than usual, are noisily playing. Through the open windows comes the whiff of distinctive cooking, of spices and herbs, and laughter fills these modest houses.

The rue des Ecoiffes, the rue du Roi-de-Sicile, the rue des Rosiers and ever so many other neighbouring streets, are celebrating the Passover, memorial of the Exodus from Egypt, with unleavened bread, and all the other rites.

It ■ an affecting sight, this Jewish population, still observing the customs of the Orient, celebrating the ancient ways, on the threshold of assimilation, where those who came a little earlier in immigration have already accepted the rhythm of European life. For France is wonderful at remoulding and winning love,

as so many thousands of Jews from this very quarter proved, by voluntarily given her their lives during the War.

I thought of this as I walked through these festive streets, and of the tenacious, mystical and invincible fate that sustains this scattered people these thousands of years. And out of the depths of my mind rose a vision, vivid, unforgettable.

It was in the spring that I was in Palestine. From the inhuman sands of the Dead Sea to the indescribable sweetness of Galilee this unique land unfolded itself before me with its valleys full of herds and of hope, its scattered monuments of the sovereigns that once reigned here and vanished, the Holy City, that gave birth to three religions. A new spiritual force comes from the heights of a clear sky to those who see this land.

One day, I watched a batch of immigrants disembark at Jaffa. Arab boatmen, tanned and turbaned, brightly clad, chanting in unison, pulled on their long oars and deposited on the quay crowds of Jews, whom an irresistible longing had drawn to their ancestral land.

They came from Poland. Nothing had prepared them for their hard task of planting on sterile ground. They wore their traditional black caftans, that poverty and the voyage in ships' holds had soiled and torn, and all their worldly belongings were miserable little packs, containing only absolute necessities. Under the pitiless downpour of the sun they resembled sombre, haggard, forlorn birds.

But a man with a grey beard silenced them with a gesture and started a hymn. He was their Rabbi. And the faces of these miserable ones were transformed, became at the same time grave, tender and joyful. And when they had prayed, their faces were joyful, radiating an assurance and a faith which would never again leave them.

What does the suffering of the past, the work of the future matter, one of them said to me in Russian, now that we have arrived in the land of Israel for Passover ?

Six months later, after travelling in Syria, I returned. Wandèring in the outskirts of Tel-Aviv, a modern town at the doors of

Jaffa, I observed, between two hillocks, about forty houses, put up in the most appalling disorder; each in a different style, without any plan, without any arrangement. I went up.

Profound misery reigned over this agglomeration, stuck up in the midst of sterility, of dust under the pitiless rays of the sun. They were unsubstantial huts, constructed of boards, of all descriptions, of all sizes. And the pitiful population they sheltered was dressed all in black. Even the children wore black caftans, as if to challenge the sun.

To complete the impression of madness conveyed by this sordid hamlet and its inhabitants, all these black-robed people were laughing. They laughed at their scantiness, and the surrounding sterility, at the desert. They laughed with indescribable joy, which seemed to be part of their very beards, earlocks, black caftans.

And yet, they were not mad. They had installed a tannery, a carpenter's workshop, they had planted fields of vegetables. All this with the most primitive methods and with clumsy hands, for there was not a workman, a peasant among them. They were petty merchants and tailors.

Who had taught them to build, to construct, even so rudely, these little houses, to cultivate their vegetables? And to carry on their industries?

I put the question with a surprise that I did not attempt to conceal.

He did! they cried.

And I saw at the back of the group an elderly, corpulent man. His grey beard covered his black chest, and his austere features were shaking with silent laughter. Suddenly I recognised him. It was the Rabbi, who had transformed with a hymn the miserable Polish immigrants on the Jaffa quay six months ago.

"Why are you surprised?" he said. "We have only just started work. What can one not do when one has arrived in the land of Israel for Passover!"

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## THE LAST KOPEK

By S. FRUG

*Translated by* HANNAH BERMAN

Simon Samuel Frug, born 1860, in the province of Herson, in the Ukraine, in one of the Jewish agricultural colonies founded in the time of Nicholas I. Died, 1917, in Petrograd. His father was a poor farmer. Attended Chedar up to the age of nine, then went for three years to the village school, learning to read and write Russian. At sixteen he went to the city of Herson hoping to continue his education. Worked for some years in the office of the Herson Rabbinate. Took to writing Russian poems, the first appearing in 1880 in the Russo-Jewish periodical "Rasviet." It created a stir and he was invited to come to St. Petersburg, and he contributed regularly to Russian periodicals and soon won an important place in Russian literature. He began writing in Yiddish in 1888. He was the first to introduce European standards in Yiddish poetry. His Russian work ■ more important than his Yiddish, where he had to feel his way, while in Russian he had a great tradition behind him. A complete collection of his Russian works appeared in 1904 in six volumes.

IN a certain village, by the name of Shmounevká—where once lived Reb Leiballe Peltzel—whose memory for a blessing !—and where, since then not a year passes but six or seven twins are born—in this same famous village an event took place which is worth while relating.

One fine morning, it became known that not one single *kopek* coin was left in the whole village.

At first sight, it seems an extravagant statement ; for, how could ■ possibly happen that there should not be a single *kopek* left among a villageful of Jews ?

True, ■ happens, that nearly half a townful of Jews not only haven't a *kopek*, but not even a broken *groschen*. And there is no flour for the Sabbath bread ; not a bundle of straw with which to heat the stove ; not a bit of a shirt on a single back ; but there is

in that same community a tax-farmer who has roast liver, a reformed rabbi who eats crabs every day, and has coffee and rusks ; to say nothing of a doctor who has an unorthodox kitchen, an apothecary with a shaven chin, an inn-keeper who plays cards on the Sabbath day, and a usurer who, if you ask him, can say how many feather beds, pillows and candlesticks there are in the village—all these people without whom, alas, the tiniest Jewish village in the world cannot prosper.

But, however that may be, things happen in this world which are contrary to the laws of nature. That is why, as I am telling you, it occurred in Shmounevka that, look from to-day till to-morrow, you could not find a Jew—may ■ never happen to you !—who could produce one single *kopek*. Not even if you offered a *rouble* for a *kopek*.

When the Rabbi got to know of this, he first washed his hands and said the blessing for something new. Then he sent to call the leading householders of the village to a conference with him.

The beadle ran about like mad through all the streets, and immediately after the evening service, the people assembled at the Rabbi's house.

The Rabbi took a generous pinch of snuff, cleared his throat, and began with these words :

" Gentlemen ! We can't rail against the Ruler of the Universe. No doubt He is right, and His judgment is right and a Jew must accept ■ all willingly. Because of the great multitude of our sins, we are certainly not worthy of even a thousandth part of the bounty and the graciousness He vouchsafes unto us. Therefore, we must realise that whatever God—blessed be His Name !—does for us it is only for the sake of our ancestors, and, in particular, my friends, the coming of the Messiah which is the greatest thing in the world, and for which Jews have already been waiting for thousands of years. Tell me, how is it possible that we, with our good deeds—begging your pardon !—our piety, our Jewishness, should be privileged to bring about the redemption ? . . . But one does not ask questions of the Almighty. The *Gemarah* says : ' The son of David will not come until there is no man to be found with a single coin in his pocket.' . . . Jews ! Commend yourselves to His dear Name : In the whole of Shmounevka there ■ not one single *kopek* left. So therefore, Jews, prepare yourselves for the coming of the Messiah ! . . . "

For several minutes the people sat there confused. The coming of the Messiah ! . . . It was not a light thing to say—prepare yourselves for the coming of the Messiah. . . . True, what Jew does not believe that now, now, and he will hear the sound of the shofar—the long-drawn-out blast of joy which will resound from one end of the world to the other ; and that the Righteous Redeemer will appear on the Mount of Olives, riding on his white horse. . . . But to say suddenly : Prepare yourselves. The Messiah is coming ! . . .

" Rabbi," said one of the householders at last, " then it means Palestine, and the ' Lovers of Zion,' and the colonies. . . ."

At this, Menasseh-Mendel, the contractor, stood up, drew a thick packet of papers from his breast pocket, tied up with a piece of blue woollen thread, banged his fist on the table, and said :

" People ! Wait a while. . . . This very day I have made up the accounts of the building—the public baths, I mean—and I intended asking the Rabbi to call a meeting, so that——"

" Eh ? What ? " voices rose on all sides. " What accounts ? . . . What is he after now with his accounts ? . . ."

" Hush, friends, hush ! " said the Rabbi.

" Tell us, *Reb Menasseh-Mendel*," he went on, turning to the contractor, " tell us what you wanted to communicate to the people."

" I wanted to say, Jews, that as regards the accounts, in drawing up the total, I find after paying for the building, the public baths, I mean, there is some public money left with me. . . ."

" How much ? . . . How much ? . . ."

" A *kopek*."

And Menasseh-Mendel groped and drew out from among the papers a little packet in a piece of paper, unwrapped it, and placed on the table a *kopek*.

For about five minutes there was unbroken silence in the room in which the meeting was held. Those nearest to it looked at the *kopek* as though they did not know what they were looking at. Young men craned their necks to get a sight of the *kopek*, even from a distance, as if they had never seen the face of a coin in their lives.

Finally the Rabbi again spoke, and he said :

" A balance, do you say, *Reb Menasseh-Mendel* ? Of course

you are right—a balance ■ a balance. But perhaps you have made a mistake, *Reb Menasseh-Mendel*? One may sometimes make a mistake in an account, you know . . .”

“A mistake! A mistake! Of course, it’s a mistake!!” people were saying on all sides. “That’s a nice thing to get now at such a time, an account! An account from the contractor! . . .”

“It’s a funny business, I tell you, if you deal with Jews!” *Menasseh-Mendel* cried angrily. “A joke, as sure as I am a Jew! . . . Last year, when the accounts were made up, and I told you that there was not enough money for the building, you made a row: ‘It’s a lie! it’s a lie!’ you shouted. ‘There must be at least another 150 roubles.’ Isn’t that the truth? And now, when I tell you that there ■ a balance to the good, and put it down in hard cash, you want to have it the other way round . . .”

“*Reb Menasseh-Mendel*,” the Rabbi intervened at this point. “I beg your pardon a thousand times. . . . Don’t take any notice of it. Young men, fools! They don’t understand what they are saying. . . . Don’t take it to heart. . . . The account is not the main thing just now. It ■ the *hokeh*. Because, you understand——”

And here the Rabbi again turned to the assembly:

“People,” he began, “it seems that because of the multitude of our sins, the time has not yet come for us Jews to be redeemed. The Messiah cannot come yet, because that which is spoken of in the *Gemarrah* has not yet come about. As you see, there is still money here . . .”

“Rabbi,” said one of the householders—a wise Jew, who in years gone by was the first councillor in all communal affairs—

“Rabbi,” he said, “we must consider the matter, and decide what to do.”

“All right,” said the Rabbi. “Tell us, *Reb Kalman*: What are we to do?”

*Reb Kalman* pondered for a few minutes, and then he said:

“Rabbi, I think the *hokeh* should be thrown into the river.”

“Into the river,” repeated the young men. “Did you hear that? Throw ■ into the river, he said.”

“Hush! Hush!” the Rabbi called out. “Keep quiet, young people. Let us talk. . . . H-m-m . . . And what do you think about it, *Reb Shlouma*, *Reb Avrom-Baer*, *Reb Mordecai*! . . .”

*Reb Shlouma*, a scholarly Jew, took his beard into his hand, coughed and said:

"Into the river? No, not into the river. Because, firstly, that would be ignoring the commandment: Thou shalt not destroy; and, secondly, it is really no plan at all. The *kopek* might be swallowed by a pike, and one of us may either catch the particular pike, or buy it, and so get back the same *kopek*. But on the other hand, we are not fishers, and none of us will buy the pike, because there is no money. That is true, but there are no impossibilities for the Almighty. . . . So my advice is: First of all, since we have to get rid of the *kopek* in order to bring about the redemption, then the sin of destroying is not so great, and since it is no plan at all to throw the *kopek* into the river, let us throw it into the public baths. There are no fish to catch in the public baths; and besides, there is such a deep, thick layer of mud at the bottom that the *kopek* will sink down there for ever."

"Yes, yes! This is really a plan," came a chorus of voices from all around.

"No, my dear Jews, it is no plan at all!" interposed *Reb Mordecai Yannever*—a modernist Jew, who was for the past fifteen years the principal of the Talmud Torah. "It is no plan at all—to take public money and throw it into the mud. Here is a better idea. For about ten years now, the roof of the Talmud Torah is leaking. ■ would be only right to assign the *kopek* for repairs to the Talmud Torah. What do you think, *Herr Glassman*?"

*Reb Shloulma Glassman*, the official representative to the Government of the Great Synagogue of *Shmouncevká*, stroked his little grey beard, and said:

"Of course, *Reb Mordecai*, you are quite right. The Talmud Torah needs repairing, and it would be the right thing to do. . . . But not now. For if the Messiah comes, we shall not need any Talmud Torah here. It is true, that we shall not need any houses of learning or synagogues, either. But there is a vast difference between a Talmud Torah and a house of learning. A Talmud Torah is only an elementary school, on Jewish lines; while a synagogue, a house of learning, ■ a sacred edifice. You say that the rain drips through the roof of the Talmud Torah. Doesn't it drip through into the synagogue as well? Your roof has three holes, ours has thirteen. Of course, we shall take neither the Talmud Torah nor the synagogue with us when the Messiah comes. But to leave behind us a synagogue, a sacred

edifice, with holes in it—that is a desecration of the Holy Name. Therefore, my advice ■ that the *kopek* should be assigned for repairs to our synagogue—so that there should, God forbid! be no desecration of the Holy Name . . .”

“You talk of desecration of the Holy Name?” cried in a screech *Reb Gershon Tzweck*, the President of the burial society. “A desecration of the Holy Name, *Reb Shlouma*? No. Let me talk. . . . A synagogue is certainly a sacred edifice, and much more than a Talmud Torah. But what about a cemetery? Eh? The Rabbi says that the Messiah is coming. Good. We shall take out of the synagogue the scrolls of the Law, the seven-branched candlestick from its stand, the candelabras, the curtains before the Ark of the Law, the laver, and even all the tattered leaves under the Reader’s desk, and there will be only the four walls and the roof left. But the cemetery and the graves and the headstones will remain here intact. Now tell me this, people. For the last twenty years the cemetery has been left practically unfenced. Pigs and cows and horses go about among the headstones, and trample down the graves. Isn’t that a desecration of the Holy Name? Would it not be the fairest way to assign the *kopek* for putting up a paling for the cemetery? The cemetery ■ more important than the synagogue. And besides, our houses of learning have more revenue than the cemetery——”

“Revenue—do you say?—Revenue?! ” *Glassman* woke up. “What do you mean? Don’t we account for every *kopek*? ”

“Your expenditure on repairs, too?” came with a laugh from one of the young men.

“Eh, what? On repairs?” *Glassman* shrieked aloud. “And the burial society—the toppers, the drunkards! Do you ever demand an account from them? . . .”

“*Herr Glassman*! I insist that you keep a check on your tongue!” *Reb Gershon Tzweck* screeched. “You’d do better not to start that sort of thing, otherwise——”

“Friends! Friends!” the Rabbi quickly intervened. “Please, please. . . . Don’t forget yourselves! . . . Jews.”



The same evening, while the meeting was being held at the home of the Rabbi of *Shmounevka*, a celestial messenger came to

the Messiah from the Father of the Universe, notifying him that in a village of the name of Shmounevká there was not one single *kopek* left among the Jews. It was true that there was still one *kopek*, public property. But a meeting was being held at the Rabbi's house, and they would decide what to do with the *kopek*.—Jews, bless them, get rid of hundreds and thousands of public money, so there would not be much difficulty about a *kopek*.—And therefore, the words of the *Gemarráh* in relation to the coming of the Messiah must be fulfilled.

"Not one single *kopek*?" the Messiah asked in astonishment. "How can that be? How can it happen that there should not be a single *kopek* left among Jews? Especially the Jews of to-day who, for a *kopek*, are ready to tear out each other's beards and earlocks; and for a rouble they will sell their own father. . . . So the question arises: How could it happen that an entire congregation should become so impoverished? Of course there are no impossibilities for the Creator of the Universe, and what the *Gemarráh* says must surely be fulfilled.—So, I'd better go along."

The Messiah ordered his white donkey to be led out of the stable, and his shofar to be got ready.

The donkey which had been standing in the stable for hundreds of years, was covered with dust and dirt; so that it was a difficult job to clean him up. The shofar, too, was dust-laden, and had to be soaked in vinegar for a whole hour. ■ was quite natural. Seeing and hearing all that goes on among the Jews, the Messiah could never have dreamt that he would soon have to go to redeem the Children of Israel. He couldn't have foreseen that Jews should be left without a single *kopek*. Besides, as you surely remember, the *Gemarráh* mentions another sign of the coming of the Messiah: When a generation arises that is all saints, or else all sinners. Well, as regards saints—there is nothing to be said. Fine saints Jews are nowadays! So the only hope is in the generation of sinners; that is, everybody to become wicked, heretics. But tell me, I ask you, do you know present-day heretics? Does the modern Jew know what heresy means? Now, once upon a time, long ago, there were real heretics. A heretic of old used to study for years how to be a proper heretic. At first the heretic was a young man with a keen brain for learning. Before he was married, he used to spend all his time at the house of learning. After he was married, he lived with his parents-in-law,

and having no need to worry about making a living, he went on studying. The woman's questions from the section of the Talmud that deals with the levirate; architecture from the tractate dealing with Goshen; domiciliary rights in the cities of refuge. Just study, study, study.—Afterwards he somehow got hold of a little modernist book, a prohibited work in short or long lines. Then the devil brought down a teacher from a Government school, a University graduate, a newspaper: *The Lebanon*; a little volume: *The Dawn*. In later years a copy of the *Hamelitz* or *Haxephirah*. What with one thing and another, there was a whirl set up in the young man's brain; darkness descended upon it, as when there is an eclipse of the sun. And gradually the one-time respectable young man would emerge as a complete heretic, up to every trick, full of terrifying questions and dark expositions. For instance, he would interpret the law prohibiting the lighting of fires on the Sabbath in such a way that it appeared as if smoking on the Sabbath were the right thing to do. . . . It was a heretic of this sort that the angels wrestled with, and did not vanquish. A heretic like that used to pull a long nose at the angel of death himself, and die with his transgressions on his soul, without repenting and without repeating the death-bed confession. Now, if there were to arise a whole generation of that kind of heretic, the Messiah would have no option, but would be compelled to come. But what does one find among the heretics of to-day?—Jews ride and smoke on the Sabbath—do not fast even on the Day of Atonement, eat forbidden food. You ask one of these heretics:

"Why do you smoke on the Sabbath?"

"Because I want to smoke," he will answer you.

"Why do you ride?"

"Because I don't want to walk."

"Why don't you fast on the Day of Atonement?"

"Because I want to eat."

To the point, without any explanations. If you tried him, you would find that he can't even read Hebrew, has already forgotten the ABC. It is this cold-bloodedness towards God, towards religion, towards the obligation which rests upon every man to believe in some sort of a god, but to believe profoundly and sincerely—it ■ this cold-bloodedness which constitutes the heretic of to-day. A heretic of old used to eat forbidden food in

the name of modernism, wear a short jacket in the name of modernism, read a newspaper in the name of modernism. And when a society was formed in Petersburg for the dissemination of modernism, he used to send his last ten *roubles*, and collect from other people as much as possible to support the society. But a present-day heretic? Above all, he is a coarse fellow who hasn't even heard the word "modernism." And if he happens to be an educated man; with a diploma—what does he do? As a student, he himself accepts donations, studies, eats and drinks at the expense of the society. And afterwards, when he becomes a lawyer, a doctor, an engineer, and makes hundreds and thousands, he never remembers the bread and salt with which the modernists provided him. And if somebody reminds him, he pretends to know nothing about it. And if he is reminded in ten years' time that the undertakings he gave the society to repay them have not yet been carried out, he answers that ten years is beyond the statute of limitation, and the agreements are null and void. What can you do: bring an action against him?

Now that, you see, is the kind of heretic that even the devils out of hell will get tired of bothering with. And the Messiah certainly has no use for them. . . .

So there is only the first way left for bringing the Messianic times—not a *kopek* in the pocket of any Jew. No money; no Jewish rich; no philanthropists to whom God Himself—poor thing!—has to pay usury in the shape of the best portions of the Law on Sabbaths and festivals; seats at the eastern wall in the synagogue; forgiveness of sins; first places in the processions at the Festival of the Rejoicing in the Law; clamorous benedictions; hot, fresh, writhing prayers over their dead bodies and lamentations from one end of the world to the other. . . . No honours; no pride of descent; no money; and no blood. . . . And this, you will please remember, has already been fulfilled in this world. And where? In Shmounevka.

### III

Swift as an eagle the Righteous Redeemer flew on his snow-white donkey. Out of forests and into forests stretched the long, long road, and sweet as the note of a violin sounded the voice of the Messiah as he sang the words of the beloved Psalm:

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing : then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

The Lord hath done great things for us : *whereof* we are glad.

Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

Loudly and freely, sweetly and lovingly the voice of the Messiah ran over the hills and valleys, forests and fields, rivers and chaams. . . . With awe and joy there drew towards him

Heaven and the stars that shine,

The valley, and the hill,

To hear, feel and drink their fill

Of his voice divine.

Out of forests and into forests stretched the great long road. And the farther he went, brighter and more bright grew the face of the Messiah, until he came into Shmounevka. . . .

And when he rode into Shmounevka, the meeting had just finished, just as it ought to be : Jews were pulling each other by the beards and earlocks. Fiery blows, resounding smacks, oaths and curses like peas out of a sack.

One was yelling : " For the Talmud Torah ! "

Another : " For the Synagogue ! "

A third : " For the Cemetery ! "

The fourth and the fifth supported the first and the second. . . . And above all the voices rose the screaming of women and the bitter wailing of little children. . . . The street was all upside down, and the earth was trembling.

" No," said the Messiah, " I have come too soon  
He turned the donkey round, and went back. . . .

# MOSES MONTEFIORE

By SH. AN-SKY

*Translated by* JOSEPH LEFTWICH

Sh. An-sky (Solomon Zanvill Rappoport) born in Witebsk, White Russia, in 1863, died 1920. Author of the famous play "The Dybbuk." Studied Talmud up to the age of fifteen. About that time met his life-long friend, Dr. Chaim Jitlovsky, the philosopher of Yiddish culture, who was two years his junior. Threw himself into the Socialist movement soon after. Joined the movement to educate the masses and went to live among the Russian peasants, sharing their conditions and work, and winning their confidence. Organised readings in the villages. Wrote for Russian periodicals. Published several Russian novels of village life. Under Jitlovsky's influence gradually interested himself in Jewish life and wrote several Jewish stories in Russian. Became acquainted with Yiddish literature, which had until then been a closed book to him. Took part in the Russian revolution of 1905. After it was crushed, he turned to Jewish folklore, and was one of the leaders of the Jewish historical-ethnographic expedition started by Baron Horace Gunzburg. Collected a wealth of Jewish folk-stories, legends, songs, etc. The outbreak of the War interrupted his work on this material. Threw himself entirely into the work of organising relief for the war victims. Had written "The Dybbuk" just as the War broke out, simultaneously in Russian and Yiddish. (Bialik translated it into Hebrew). Stanislavski was to have produced it at the Moscow Art Theatre, but the War intervened. After the revolution he was elected to the Constituent Assembly. Left Russia after the Bolshevik revolution, being opposed to the Terror, and went to Warsaw, where he died soon after.

## I

FAR, far away, across the sea, in England, lived Reb Moses Montefiore. He was a great man in Israel, and his name was famous from one end of the world to the other. He was the chief adviser of the British Queen, and she would not take a step without consulting him. The greatest princes and lords bowed down before him. Even the kings of foreign countries showed him great honour.

His wealth was beyond compute. He owned many wells of quicksilver, and though full vessels were drawn up day and night, the wells never ran dry. And quicksilver, as everyone knows, is more expensive than ordinary silver, some say even more expensive than gold. That will give an idea how wealthy he was ! He lived in the Royal Palace, which was ornamented with gold and silver and precious stones and pearls. He had hundreds of servants, and when he travelled it was only in a golden coach, drawn by eight horses, and before him sped runners, crying " Way there for our Lord Montefiore ! "

But it was not his power nor his wealth that made Reb Moses Montefiore famous all over the world. It was all because of his noble deeds, because of what he did for Israel. If ever a misfortune came upon Jews, it might be at the very ends of the earth, if there was a pogrom, a libel, an expulsion, or whatsoever civil edict, he rose up at once like a lion to defend his brothers. He rushed to the Queen, threw himself on his knees before her and asked for aid. He travelled to the kings of foreign lands, spent gold lavishly, and would not rest till the edict was annulled.

At the same time he was very generous with his money. He built schools and Yeshibas, maintained thousands of Jews who sat studying the sacred tomes, helped the poor, supported the fallen, was a father to the widows and the orphans. And he was also a really pious Jew, and scrupulously observed all the commandments.

But since it is impossible in this world for any man to be without fault, Reb Moses Montefiore lacked something—he lacked learning.

He was no ignoramus, God forbid ! On the contrary, he knew his Gemarah, studied a complete section every day, and he wasn't content just with studying the Gemarah, but he studied it together with the Tosefta and Maharasha as it ought to be done. But his learning lacked depth, acuteness, fire. And Reb Moses Montefiore knew it, and grieved because of it.

At the same time that the name of Reb Moses Montefiore was famous all over the world, there lived in the town of Minsk, in Lithuania, the Gaon Rabbi Gershon Tanchum. He, too, was a great man in Israel, and his fame was world-wide. He knew the whole of Sha'as by heart. There was no volume of Jewish

learning that he had not studied. There was no Halachah to which he had not contributed something new. In him were wells full of the quicksilver of wisdom, and no matter how much he drew upon them, they were always brimful. He, too, built great palaces of invention and ingenuity, and walked at ease among the orchards and the vineyards of the glorious Hagadath. And he spent his spiritual treasures with a lavish hand. He gave food and drink to those who hungered and thirsted for the word of God.

But Rabbi Gershon Ben Tanchum also lacked something. With all his wisdom and greatness he was terribly poor. His pay as a Rabbi was two gulden a week, and since he had a big family, he suffered hunger and privation.

And there came a day when the fame of Reb Gershon Ben Tanchum reached the ears of Reb Moses Montefiore. And Reb Moses Montefiore decided to have him as his teacher. And when Reb Moses Montefiore decides to have something, it is, naturally, not a difficult matter for him to have it. So he didn't take long to make up his mind, and ordered eight horses to be harnessed to his gold coach, and he went off to Minsk. And on his way, as was his wont, he threw heaps of roubles out of the windows on both sides of the road. He did not even look to see who picked it up, a Jew or a non-Jew—it was all one to him!

Now you must realise that it is ever so far from England to Minsk. But what does that matter if you travel with eight spanking steeds! A few days pass and Reb Moses Montefiore is in Minsk. He stops in the middle of the market place, and asks where Reb Gershon Tanchum lives. So they point out to him a little old house in a side street behind the synagogue. And Reb Moses Montefiore goes along there, walks into the room, and finds Reb Gershon poring over a tome. So Reb Moses Montefiore goes up to him and says:

"Rabbi, I want you to know that I am Moses Montefiore."

When Rabbi Gershon heard these words, he stood up quickly, repeated the blessing on seeing great men, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who hast given of Thy wisdom to flesh and blood," and greeted his visitor.

Reb Moses Montefiore responded to his greeting, and said: "I want you to know, Rabbi Gershon Tanchum, that I have decided to have you as my teacher. I shall give your family as

much as they require for their needs, and you will come away with me. You will live with me in the Palace, will sit at my table, and take from my hand for everything you must have—for clothing and shoes, for a bath, and a pinch of snuff."

Rabbi Gershon Tanchum hears these words and does not know what to reply. Here Reb Moses Montefiore has come to fetch him in a gold coach, so how can he refuse him? Yet he replies that he must first consult his wife and obtain permission from his congregation. And when he has done this, Reb Moses Montefiore counts out a thousand roubles in gold coins for his family, seats Reb Tanchum at his side in the gold coach and off they go in an auspicious hour.

When they arrive in England, Reb Moses Montefiore conducts Rabbi Gershon Tanchum first of ■ over his estates. He shows him: his wells of quicksilver, his towns and villages, fields and woods, orchards and vineyards, and he says to him:

"Rabbi, look! Everything you see around you is mine, and more also!"

Rabbi Gershon Tanchum looks and marvels. It has never entered his mind that it is possible for any one man to have so many possessions.

Then Reb Moses Montefiore takes him into the Palace and leads him through all the rooms. Each room more beautiful than the one before, and ■ ornamented with gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, and hung with costly tapestries. Rabbi Gershon Tanchum looks and marvels. He has never before seen so many beautiful things, not even in his dreams.

Then Reb Moses Montefiore takes him into the largest chamber of all, and it is all lighted up with diamonds and brilliants, and on the ceiling are painted the sun and moon and all the signs of the Zodiac, and they revolve in keeping with the time, and along the whole length of the chamber are tables of silver covered with cloth of gold. And the finest viands are on the tables, and there are crystal flasks filled with the rarest wines. And at the tables are seated on one side, the princes, dukes and lords of England, and on the other the wealthiest and the finest Jews of the British Empire. And there are scores of servants attending to their wants. And as soon as Reb Moses Montefiore enters they all

jump up from their seats, bow low before him, and cry with one voice : " Long live our lord, Reb Moses Montefiore."

When Rabbi Gershon Tanchum sees what great honour is being paid to Reb Moses Montefiore, he starts shaking over, and when the servants hand him the finest food, he is unable to lift up his spoon, because he is all a-tremble, awed and terrified by the riches, greatness and honour of Reb Moses Montefiore.

After they had eaten, when the princes, earls and lords had left, Reb Moses Montefiore rose in his place, and said :

" And now, Gershon Tanchum will expound to us the Torah."

Rabbi Gershon Tanchum wanted to expound the Torah, but he could not open his mouth for fear. Reb Moses Montefiore reiterated his command : " Rabbi Gershon Tanchum will expound the Torah."

So Rabbi Gershon Tanchum pulled himself together, and began quietly, with a quivering voice, to expound the Torah. And Reb Moses Montefiore listened. And the more he heard, the more amazed he was at his immense learning.

And Rabbi Gershon Tanchum pulled himself together again, and suddenly he forgot all about Reb Moses Montefiore's estates. The wells of quicksilver, the fields and woods, the orchards and vineyards all vanished out of his mind, his voice ceased to quiver, and he penetrated into the depths of the great forests of Halacha. And Reb Moses Montefiore listened and was amazed at the immensity of his wisdom.

And Rabbi Gershon Tanchum pulled himself together again. He forgot the Palace with its ornamented chambers, he forgot the costly food, the princes and the earls, and the honours that were paid to Reb Moses Montefiore. And his voice grew firm and loud, and he soared at ease over the Garden of Eden of the Haggadah. And Reb Moses Montefiore was listening now with fear.

And when Rabbi Gershon Tanchum entirely divested himself of the outside world, he rose to the highest peaks of the Torah and descended to its utmost depths, and his face was aflame, and his voice thundered. And Reb Moses Montefiore was seized with terror, and could not remain seated where he was, and he was all a-tremble, hand and foot.

## II

When the Queen of England had only just ascended the throne, and the coronation had not yet taken place, she arranged a big banquet, and asked to it all the kings and princes throughout the world, in order to get to know them. And she also invited all the great men of her own kingdom, dukes and ministers, and at the head of them all, of course, the chief of her advisers, Reb Moses Montefiore.

When they had all come together at the banquet, and the gathering had become somewhat elevated by reason of the choice wines, the kings began to boast, each about his own kingdom. One boasted of the size of his land, another of its wealth, a third of its power, and the fourth of its wisdom.

And the Czar of Russia rose up, Nicholas I, and he said : " My country is the greatest in the world. My people is like the sand of the sea for numbers. And my wealth is beyond compute. There is only one trouble. There are a great many Jews in my kingdom, and I can't think how to get rid of them."

Reb Moses Montefiore heard this, and it displeased him. So he went up to Nicholas, and bowed low before him, and said :

" My Lord King. I understand that you are dissatisfied because you have so many Jews in your kingdom. You can get rid of them very easily."

" How ? " asked Nicholas.

" Very simply. Sell them to me. I shall pay you for every Jewish soul, aged or infant, man or woman, three roubles in cash."

" And you will take the Jews out of my land ? "

" I shall not leave one behind."

The thought made Nicholas very happy. It would be a wonderful business. He would get rid of all the Jews, and he would have a fat sum of money in return. So he immediately assented, and it was arranged that in three months' time Montefiore would come to Russia, pay his money and take away all the Jews.

When he came back to Russia, Nicholas called all his Ministers and Senators and said to them :

" I have made a splendid stroke of business. I have sold all our Jews at three roubles apiece, cash down."

When the Ministers and Senators heard this, they were seized with consternation and cried :

" But, Lord King ! What have you done ! We are now receiving from every Jew, man, woman or child, an average of forty roubles a year. It will ruin us if you give them away for three."

So Nicholas realised that he had blundered. And he asked what could now be done.

And the Ministers and Senators began to think how to avoid giving up the Jews. Finally one Minister said :

" My Lord King ! I have thought of a plan how to keep the Jews here. A Jew is recognised by his long beard and earlocks and his long caftan. Decree that all Jews must cut off their beards and earlocks and wear short coats. And no one will be able to recognise that they are Jews. And when Montefiore comes, hand over to him the Karaites and say that there are no other Jews in your kingdom."

The plan pleased Nicholas and he decreed that all Jews must cut off beards and earlocks and wear short coats.

When Reb Moses Montefiore arrived in Petersburg at the time arranged, and went to the Czar's Palace with his contract, a Minister came out, and said :

" We consider the Karaites as real Jews, and there are no other Jews in our Kingdom. If you wish, take the Karaites and pay according to their number."

Reb Moses Montefiore realised at once that they did not want to let the Jews go. And he became very angry, and went back home.

He stopped for the Sabbath in Vilna. At that time Count Potocki was Governor of Vilna. And when he got to know that Reb Moses Montefiore had come, he went to welcome him.

Reb Moses Montefiore received him with great honour. As they sat there talking, a rider arrived from Petersburg and handed Reb Moses Montefiore a sealed letter from Petersburg. Reb Moses Montefiore took the letter, examined it, and put it down on the table.

Count Potocki was amazed.

" Why don't you open it ? " he cried. " The respect due to royalty requires that the Czar's letter should be opened immediately."

To this Reb Moses Montefiore replied :

"I cannot unseal the letter, because it is forbidden on the Sabbath."

So Count Potocki took the letter, and wanted to open it. But Reb Moses Montefiore stopped him, and said :

"You are a great lord, and you are, moreover, my guest. I cannot allow you to open my letters for me."

So Count Potocki called one of his servants and told him to open the letter, and as soon as the servant opened the letter he fell down dead, because the letter was poisoned.

When Reb Moses Montefiore saw that, he ordered his coach to be got ready, and he rode away on the Sabbath. When he came home, he flung himself on his knees before the Queen and told her all that had happened. The Queen was furious, and declared war on Nicholas.

That was how the Crimean War began.

## BLIND !

By DIONEO

**I. W. Shklovsky (Dioneo).** Born, 1865, in Elisabethgrad, South Russia. Educated at the University of Kharkoff. Exiled in 1887 for political reasons by administrative order (without trial) for five years, to Sredny Kolymsk (District of Yakutsk). Returned to Russia in 1892 and begun to write for the great radical paper "*Russkia Viedmosti*" which, in 1896, sent him to London as Special Correspondent. He continued to work for this paper until it was suppressed by the Bolsheviks, and was one of the most important writers in the Russian Press, the acknowledged teacher and guide of the Russian intellectuals in the ways of English culture and civilisation. Contributed for twenty years to the monthly Review "*Russkoe Bogatstvo*" until it was suppressed by the Bolsheviks.

From 1909 contributed to the "*Viestnik Evropy*" until its suppression in 1917. Also contributed articles to the monthly "Review of the Russian Geographical Society," which presented him with a gold medal for his work.

Since the Bolshevik Revolution in October, 1917, he has contributed to the "*Poslednia Novosti*" (Paris). Since 1923 he has also been a contributor to the American monthly review "*The Future*" and other European papers and periodicals. Is also a contributor of an article in the 13th Edition of the "*Encyclopaedia Britannica*" and to the "*Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*" in New York.

Publications : "*In Far North East Siberia*" (published St. Petersburg, in 1895 ; translated into French in 1896 and into English in 1916 ; Macmillan) ; "*English Sketches*" (published 1902), St. Petersburg ; "*English Silhouettes*" (published 1905), St. Petersburg ; "*On Liberty*" (2 vols., published 1909), St. Petersburg ; "*Literary Sketches*" (published Moscow, 1910) ; "*Changing England*" (2 vols., Stockholm, 1921) ; "*The Red Dawn*" (novel, Paris, 1920) ; "*The Five Years—1914-1919*" (Paris, 1920) ; "*When the Gods Departed*" (Berlin, 1923) ; "*England After the War*" (Prague, 1923).

I WAS sitting on the terrace of the Hotel Cecil, beside a chance steamboat acquaintance, the South American novelist—Diego Gamio. He had been writing uninterruptedly for some hours, and I was gazing at the last light of dying day, poured out in a

flood of radiance—smooth, fixed, and glittering as rose-coloured glass. The Spanish coast opposite extended in a violet haze ; the white houses of Tarifa had lost their contour, and floated apart as dream shapes of night melt in the day ; but high on the ridge a watchtower, like a solitary tree, was clearly outlined against the sky. The swift approach of evening, the unfamiliar surroundings, the pungent odour of jasmine, and some unknown flowers, aroused a longing for the unknown and regret for what was gone. I walked to the somewhat high stone parapet, and, leaning over, looking down. Files of unkempt, nervy little donkeys were making their way along the shore ; some, laden with stones, were going towards the flat-roofed houses, blue, rose-colour and white, which descended like a cascade to the sea. There stood the misshapen Mosque hideous with its leprous peeled blotches and close by were signboards with advertisements in English, French and Spanish. Strange was the contrast between the barefooted, wild-eyed dervishes, their heads shaven except for one long lock, and those clamant advertisements of brandy, patent medicines, machines, etc. Barelegged Arabs, and negroes with huge black, sweating leather bottles of water on their shoulders, were hurrying about everywhere—jingling bells—crawling up the steep hills—driving donkeys to the “cascade ” of rose and blue houses. More donkeys were winding out of the town to the mountains ; heavy *rifi* muffled in torn burnouses were seated on the donkeys, and, behind them, women were toiling along, bent almost to the ground under the weight of the loads they were carrying ; yet the donkeys and the women were hurrying out from the town, towards the mountains, as though happiness awaited them there, and not hard labour and blows. Down on the beach, where the outgoing sea showed its bed, even and firm as parquet, wealthy Arabs, in blue and white burnouses, and officers of the French garrison were riding in emulation of each other.

“ Real Arabian poniards ! Old steel ! ” shouted an Arab below, holding up to me a roughly fashioned iron poniard, obviously of German manufacture. “ Tuoreg belt ! ”

“ *Pobre ciego, señor !* ” (the poor blind) plaintively cried a beggar Arab, holding out a large painted wooden bowl. The cry was repeated by the blind beggar’s guide—a little boy in a long, tattered shirt, who was a mass of scurvy scabs.

“ *Pobre ciego, señor !* ”

It was the wail, full of symbolic meaning, of East appealing to West. I walked away from the parapet. Awaiting me on the terrace was another beggar, who must have been admitted as a special privilege. He was a negro of about sixty years of age—sturdy and thickset as an evergreen oak; he had a white beard, a not altogether clean nose, and magnificent gleaming white teeth. In a basket of asparto grass which he held in his hand, was a primitive, apparently home-made instrument, a kind of banjo with a single string. The old man jumped, as though he were on wires, as soon as he caught my eye.

"Negro! Sudan! Good negro!" he began, jerking each word out separately; then he laughed "He! he! he!" Throwing back his head and swaying his hips, he plucked at his banjo string and began to sing something that sounded like "Beeli lu, ishikuishikee been lee." Next he began to dance, taking long striding steps, stamping with great vigour. Suddenly stopping short, he opened his hippopotamus mouth, showing all his gleaming teeth, also his throat, and again laughed like an idiot.

"He! he! he! Negro! Sudan! Good negro! Pobre negro!" The performance was ended, and the performer extended his hand for the honorarium.

Diego had been writing all this time. I stood looking at him. Whether he felt my gaze, or because it was growing dark, he raised his head, saying:

"If you like, I will read it to you. It is a fantasy. I haven't found an end for it yet."

A manservant, in theatrical Arab costume, brought a lighted candle in a glass lantern, to which large moths with vermilion under-wings, immediately flew.

"On the 20th day of November in the year 1935—it ■ a forecast," the author hastily interpolated, noticing my involuntary movement of surprise, "on the 20th day of November in the year 1935 news came to Mokegau that, in Lima, after deliberating throughout the year, a law had been passed, concerning the regeneration of the race, and that a Public Health Committee was established, which had power to remove, or, as it was called, segregate, all the unfit, capable of furthering racial degeneration, or lowering of the physical standard. Mokegau decided to follow the example set by the capital and people began to busy themselves about the 'welfare of the coming generation,' as Don Teobaldo

wrote, when he invited the citizens to a meeting. Distinguished persons met to discuss the matter, and a Public Health Committee, consisting of the most prominent citizens, was elected, and given full powers. Among the members of the Committee were Don Luis Quisneros (a physician who had written a book on the possibility of prolonging life to a hundred years by means of a radical reform in dress fashions), General Don Cesar Conto and Don Achille Cordero. Don Cesar was renowned for the signal defeat which he suffered at Apourimak, when he lost all his guns and transport, and half his troops; military historians, however, cited many famous battles in order to demonstrate that Don Cesar's genius was especially displayed at Apourimak. General Don Achille Cordero was not in that campaign, so he had no opportunity of displaying his genius in the same manner as Don Cesar; however, when the Miranese tribe refused to procure resin entirely for nothing Don Achille, carrying out the important and responsible business of suppressing the mutiny of these peaceable, frightened Indians, who had no weapons, not even the Indian bows, burned down twenty villages, hanged some of the inhabitants on the trees, and flogged the remainder. Another member of the Committee was the distinguished and wealthy Don Teobaldo Karpancho, who owned half the factories from Ikitosa to the mouth of the Great River. (It was for his factories that the "mutinous" Indians laboured.) Also Don Teobaldo had supplied the army with tinned provisions during the war, thus finishing off the soldiers who remained after Don Cesar's last defeat at Apourimak.

"The Committee having been formed, the chairman had next to be found, and the representative of the most noble family in the Republic was unanimously elected. He was a direct descendant of a Conquistador who had fought side by side with Pizarro; he was, moreover, a marquis, possessed of twelve names, known, however, to his circle of friends by the not altogether respectful nickname of Farruco Tonto. Don Francisco (or Farruco) had a wedge-shaped forehead, his cheeks were hollow, and his ears, flat and leathery, stood out like those of a bat. When the noble marquis was speaking, his tongue occasionally fell to one side, and, at the same time, a nervous twitch of the opposite cheek seemed to be driving the defaulting tongue into the desired direction. Don Francisco, much flattered by the honour conferred upon him,

delivered a speech, struggling the while with his troublesome tongue, about duty to posterity, and the necessity of segregating the unfit until there was no possibility of any descendants being left by them. The high-sounding words 'segregation,' 'vasectomy,' 'euthanasia,' seemed to please him very much, for he pronounced them with obvious relish. After the speech, a prescription list was drawn up. It included all beggars, the feeble-minded, epileptic, crippled and otherwise disabled, and the unfit in general. The list was printed that same night and the order was in force the following day. It declared that, according to the laws passed in the year 1935, all the unfit must leave the town within twenty-four hours, under penalty of euthanasia (painless suffocation, as a parenthetical clause explained).

"On November 23rd, it was ascertained that, with the exception of three persons, all vagrants, drunkards, beggars, cripples, etc., had made their hurried departure. The three non-compliance were Don Salvador Diaz, Don Manuel Spano, and Don José Gaveño.

"For some time past, the behaviour of Don Salvador had been a scandal to all steady and respectable citizens. Inheriting great wealth from his father, the young man very soon began to squander it, and after he knew that the painful and incurable malady from which he suffered would allow him, at most, only one more year of life, his reckless dissipation was of the wildest character. So outrageous and improper was his mode of life, that serious-minded citizens, discussing it at home with relish, would stop suddenly, with startled eyes and hand to lips if ladies unexpectedly entered the room. In the opinion of the physician, Don Luis, Don Salvador's malady so fevered his body that it seemed as though, instead of blood, an infusion of cantharides raced through his veins, and the doomed man realising his fate rushed madly into all the pleasure that life still had to offer him; as for the town, he mocked at it—at its ideas—its propriety, its opinions. He remained there, because he had already squandered all his fortune (as the Committee knew) and the order was a matter of indifference to him, for he knew quite well that he had only a few weeks to live.

"Don Manuel was a poet, and quite an inoffensive person. A cripple from birth—his extreme deformity aroused both pity and aversion. He resembled a huge grey spider, or the crabs that children drive out with sticks from their hiding places under

stones. Yet this 'crab' had an exquisite appreciation of beauty, noting it everywhere, in all its manifestations, and within the misshapen body of this unfortunate, helpless being, dwelt a sweet and beautiful soul that glowed, never with anger, but with love and tenderness. Don Manuel remained in the town for he had no means of leaving it, and nowhere to go. He could scarcely move without assistance, and he was quite alone, without relatives or friends.

Even a child in Mokegau could have told why Don Achille, Don Cesar, and Don Teobaldo had insisted the name of Don José Gaveño should be included in the proscription list. Don José had written the true account of the mutiny of the Indians, and had aroused, even in distant England, indignation against the 'peacemakers.' Also, after the defeat at Apourimak, Don José had written a stinging pamphlet, which made Don Cesar the laughing-stock of every Republic in South America. The worthy citizens of Mokegau were indignant and perturbed, but they read the pamphlet in secret, recognised the truth of it, and rejoiced that it was not directed against themselves; but, when they met Don Cesar or Don Achille, they alluded to the pamphlet as being quite unworthy of notice, and advised the Generals not to pay any attention to it. Many people in the Republic disliked Don José, but respected him as a gifted and learned writer—one who wrote according to his convictions, and who was always ready to come forward in defence of his expressed views and opinions. But, while even a child could have told why Don José's name was on the proscription list, nobody could understand why so successful a writer, famous not only in, but beyond the limits of the Republic, remained in the town.

"The laws of the year 1935 condemned to euthanasia those who did not obey the order, but as the non-compliant ones were not vagrants, but prominent citizens and caballeros the Public Health Committee decided to give them a farewell supper at the best hotel in the town. A lighted lantern, hung at midnight over the belfry of the Cathedral, would serve as a signal that the moment for saving threatened posterity had come.

"On the morning of November 24th, the Committee received a letter signed, in the name of 'The Union of the last Friends,' by Chepita Montes, Catalina Garcia (whom everyone called Catija) and Lusita Ramirez.

"As those who have now incurred the penalty of euthanasia

are not criminals, but free citizens, and as they are to be removed solely in the interests of the coming generation, some difference should be made between them and condemned murderers.' Then followed a request that 'the last friends' might be permitted to do a final act of kindness by spending the last hours with them. The committee made no objection to this.

"Salvador was sitting in the brightly-lit room, his back to the window, nervously tapping his fingers on the table, when Chepita entered. Her face, with shiny skin, and the slight puffiness usually noticeable in cases of heart disease, wavered into a pitiful smile as she looked at him.

"Chepita was said to be changeable, and altogether lacking in steadiness of purpose and mental poise. She had made a pilgrimage to Salta, in honour of a miracle-working statue there—el Señor del Milagro; then she went for three months to Quito, in order to hear a local celebrity with a large forehead, and a deep, musical, baritone voice, lecture on the reviving and developing of Lamettrie's conception of *L'homme-machine*. In Salta, Chepita blindly believed that one touch of the statue's velvet loin cloth would lessen by 500 years, her term in purgatory; but in Quito, after hearing the lectures delivered by the celebrity with the large forehead, her lips took a scornful curve at any mention of life beyond the grave. Later, she went to hear the Salamanca luminary, Don Alfonso Torebio, who was on a lecturing tour in South America; and for quite six weeks afterwards, repeatedly and with unusual insistence assured everyone that 'the whole universe is merely an expression of mind or spirit and that beyond this existence there is nothing.' After a time she journeyed to Meoleno to visit the shrine of the relics of Blessed Fraile Domingo. There, she wept a little, and decided that the Salamanca luminary was in error, for, at all events, the relics were in existence, and worked miracles. Then Chepita had another change. She visited a great deal, in various towns, and became acquainted with many well-known people, principally writers, with whom, regardless of their age, she fell in love. In order to make herself an object of interest, she told them fantastic stories of intrigues and plots in which she was involved. She would ask, with an air of great mystery, that a certain letter might be posted for her in another town, and in general tried to convey an impression of being concerned in mysterious secrets.

" Salvador turned his eyes, with their yellowish whites, on Chepita as she entered the room, then he frowned and resumed his nervous tapping. His wrinkled, ashen, unshaven face, with great blue patches under the eyes, and hard lines from the sides of the nose to the corners of the mouth, somehow suggested a leathern doll which had lain long in a ditch ; yet, not so long before, that face was handsome and expressive. Chepita seated herself, and fixed her large, beautiful, gentle eyes on Salvador. Her tears at once began to flow, and she raised a perfumed lace handkerchief to wipe them away. A glint of anger sparkled in Salvador's eyes, he shrugged his shoulders, and gave an angry snort. He had not wished to go away, and he did not in the least fear the coming penalty, but he had passed a night full of dreadful nightmares one of which now filled his mind ; it had happened just before dawn. He had taken trional so that he might sleep heavily. He heard a knock on his door.

" ' Come in ! ' he cried. A man's form appeared—white, bloated, horrible—and Salvador instantly recognised the dark-eyed, carefully attired croupier whom he had often seen at San Sebastian, the previous year. Behind the croupier other figures followed, but Salvador could only dimly see them. They seized him, dragged him out of bed, laid him in the coffin they had brought, forcibly closed it, and carried it down ; he could hear the bearers groaning under the weight. They put down the coffin, then again lifted and carried it, now up, now down, until it was at last set down. He heard a voice, and he began to beat upon the coffin lid. It was removed, and Salvador found himself in a place that he already knew. Surely he was in the caves of Sare, which he had journeyed from San Sebastian to see ! There were even the tame bats that allowed themselves to be stroked. The cave seemed to be full of people, but to Salvador they were only confused shapes. Out of the shadows came a calm voice to his ear, ' Why didst thou knock ? Why didst thou cry out ? Why dost thou resist that which is predestined ? '

" ' I am alive ! I am not yet dead ! '

" ' Nay ! thou art dead ! '

" ' But I think ! I feel ! '

" ' Proof must be given to him,' said the same level voice, ' let the one who knows him best, approach ! '

" And a woman came to him. Salvador recognised her. It

was she, who, more than all others, had loved him, and whom, more than all others, he had scorned.

" 'The mirror ! ' the passionless voice was heard again.

" Then she who had loved him, brought him a mirror. He looked, and saw that his breast had become transparent, and that, instead of lungs and heart, was a moving mass of worms—greenish, fat, short.

" ' Let him look at his forehead ! ' said the unknown.

And Salvador saw that his skull was transparent, and that worms were there instead of brains.

" ' Thou seest that thou art dead ! Thou hast been always dead ! ' said the unknown. Salvador shrieked, and awoke.

" And now, sitting alone after the farewell supper, Salvador was thinking that, in truth, he was already dead when it had seemed to him that he was drinking deep draughts from the cup of life. Nervously he passed his bony smokestained fingers over the sprouting bristles of his unshaven face. Chepita wept with pity for him.

" ' Be off ! I want to be alone ! ' Salvador shouted, roughly, striking the table with the palm of his hand.

" Chepita's mortification did not prevent her from noticing, as she passed along the corridor, a door, not so completely closed to prevent one peeping through the chink. Catalina and the poet, Don Manuel, were at supper in the room. Lively, witty, clever, and generally capable, there was no woman in the town to equal Catalina Garcia, lecturer in History at the Institute, writer for the press, and a welcome contributor to many journals. She called herself Garcia, out of regard for her love, the governor of the convict prison—a strong, broad shouldered, rough man, with a heavy square chin and hard, cold, but fine eyes. It was odd that this talented girl, with her many-sided intellect, should have loved this almost illiterate man, whose name she held in lasting remembrance, though they had quarrelled continually during the six months they had lived together. Catalina had many succeeding lovers, so many that local wits composed a sonnet of their collective names. Her taste inclined to variety and the unexpected, and Don Manuel's companionship and conversation interested her, besides exciting her pity.

" The window of the room was open, and Manuel looked out over the park, which presented itself in the guise of a dense forest.

The ground beneath the trees seemed to have sunk, all at once, for a depth of several feet, so that the trunks and partly exposed roots looked like giants on short feet. Creeping plants, twisted like a ship's cable, were flung across from stem to stem, like loops of an endless lasso, and one might fancy that a being, more gigantic still than the masserandubas had been trying to bind the trees into a sheaf. The parasite plants which drew their nourishment from the trees, nourished their own smaller parasites, which nourished bracken parasites smaller still, but Don Manuel did not see in this the resemblance to human society; the gentle sensitive soul of the poet was absorbed in the plenitude of creative force with which the forest was saturated, and it seemed to him that, from the shelter of those giants, with their short, clumsy feet, and clinging parasites, ought to emerge embodiments of Nature's restless creativeness—beautiful Bacchantes pursued by fauns. Manuel began to recite, in a singing drawl :

Evobe ! vamos amantes  
A los llanos  
Donde. Avidos y jadeantes  
Corren desnudas bacantes  
Persiguiendo à los silvanos.<sup>1</sup>

" ' Whose lines are those ? Yours, Don Manuel ? ' "

" ' No, Dona Catalina, they are by the Argentine poet, Martin Merou.' Catuja's beautiful, expressive eyes clouded.

" ' More, please,' she said gently.

" ' I will read you something by our own Peruvian poet Cisneros. The poet is addressing his well-beloved, whom he calls " The Angel of Life." It ends thus :

Oh, Dejame, angel querido  
(Perdona si así te llamo).  
Deja decirte al oído ;  
Yo te amo ! ' "

" The last words died faintly away. Catuja no longer saw deformity, rather—she saw deformity transformed into beauty. A fleeting smile lifted the corners of her sensitive mouth, and the light in her half-closed eyes was dimmed.

<sup>1</sup> " Evobe ! Away, lovers, to the fields where run eager, breathless, denuded Bacchantes pursued by fauns."

<sup>2</sup> " Oh ! beloved angel ! forgive that I should thus call thee ! Let me say aloud : I love you."

"Night came, heavy with intoxicating perfume of great blue flowers, which unclosed only at sunset. In the third room, Don José Gaveño and Lusita Ramires were sitting, after supper; the champagne Lusita had drunk did not redden her pale face, but her large, dark eyes, somewhat hard and searching, glowed with the faint reflection of an inner flame. Her mouth, with its over-red lips, looked like a wound in her white face. 'Why haven't you gone away?' she asked, in a quiet level voice. Don José, glancing at the beautiful, cold, resolute face of his companion, comprehended that a special curiosity, and a desire to solve the mystery, had impelled her to come. After a silence he said,

"If you will allow me, I will tell you the story of Fraile Arnaldo of Trujillo, for many years a hermit in a cave. He was renowned for his wisdom and asceticism, and people came from distant places, even from beyond the mountains, to learn from him what they should do, that they might live righteously; and Fraile Arnaldo told them, in good faith, and with a clear conscience, what he thought and believed. Many years passed thus; the hermit grew old, and when his beard was white, and he was bent with age, his head began to whisper strange doubts to his heart. From time to time, first rarely, then frequently, head said to heart, 'Dost thou now believe all that thou teachest to others? Dost thou not deceive thyself, and others?' And at first, heart replied boldly to head, but the answers grew timid, and yet more timid, until, as the years went by, the hermit realised with horror, that his heart was desolate, the beautiful mirage vanished, and that of Truth he knew nothing at all. Still the people came to Fraile Arnaldo; they came to him in sorrow, crushed, seemingly, by the burden of life, but when they left the old man, they manifestly carried hope and courage in their hearts. And Fraile Arnaldo asked himself, 'Is it my duty to tell others that the mirage in which I believed has vanished? Ought I to place others on the brink of the abyss in which I have found myself? Such great happiness can come to them through errors and ignorance that it would be criminal to dispel the illusion. They come here unhappy—they would be still more unhappy if they knew *all* the truth.' So Fraile Arnaldo hid the desolation of his heart from those who came to him for consolation and advice, but the secret was too awful to keep hidden in his breast, never to be imparted to anyone; so the hermit tore leaves out of the books

which he alone read, wrote on them "All this is mirage," and flung them away. The midnight wind scattered the leaves and blew them into the towns and villages, and the devil picked up one of the leaves. While Fraile Arnaldo believed in the mirage, the devil was unable to appear to him, but now, knowing that the hermit's heart was empty of faith, he came to him and said,

"To thee remains yet a mirage—the most foolish of all. Thou believest that those who come here have need of thy consolation and of thy interpretation of truth? Fool! It is all mirage. Those who come here, seek not truth; they need it not, nor care they whether it be truth or mirage. To them thy faith is a phantom! And with a burst of laughter, the devil vanished. Fraile Arnaldo sank down, in despair, on the stone at the entrance to the cave; he was weak and faint from the terrible shock, and everything swam before his eyes. Then, half-unconscious, he heard a quiet, soft, alluring voice, sweeter than a mother's cradle-song, more tender than the words "I love thee," timidly breathed in his ear by a maiden, many long years before.

"Come to me!" murmured the voice. 'I will give thee peace. Poor one! Thou art worn out by suffering, thy faith is gone. In me is truth only, for I am the one reality—all else is mirage—and, excepting me, there is nothing that is certain; therefore do cowards fear me. Thou art courageous. Come to me.'

"Next day, they found Fraile Arnaldo lying at the entrance to the cave, an expression of infinite happiness stamped on his face."

■ The town slept. From the distant heights, as it seemed, came a strange confused noise.

"The Indians who live down there by the lake,' said Don José, 'say that when the body is sleeping, the soul wanders at will. Do you hear that noise? The Indians would say the liberated souls are rushing through the air, hurrying back to the bodies. Can it be that the souls also have only drab and trivial thoughts to communicate to each other?'

■ Suddenly Don José shuddered. A plaintive, piping cry came from the darkness. *Bien-te-veo* (I see thee) and again *Bien-te-veo*, from outside the same window. It was the cry of a bird—a species of owl. Don José knew it, but, for a moment it seemed

that it was *she*, for whom he waited, who surely must come soon ! Seeing how he was trembling, Lusita's pale cheeks flushed and her dark eyes were warm with pity.

" ' Dear Don José ! Go, quickly ! They will be glad if you go away ! ' But his face was transfigured with an expression of mingled joy, peace and a proud confidence, as he gazed up at a light shining high in the darkness. It was the lantern signal over the Cathedral tower. ' Though all tremble before it—I fear it not ! I am a god ! ' "

" Strictly speaking, something ought to be added by way of an ending," said Don Diego, as he laid the manuscript on the table.

" *Pobre ciego, señor !* "

The plaintive, despairing wail of the blind beggar reached us once more. Perhaps it was the unwritten ending.

## IN A BOLSHEVIST MARKET PLACE

By SIMBON YUSHKEWITCH

*Translated by JOSEPH LEFTWICH*

Simeon Yushkewitch, born 1868 in Odessa, died in 1927, in Paris, where he had resided for some years. Doctor of medicine, but abandoned this profession for literature. Wrote many novels, short stories and plays, which were very popular on the Russian, Yiddish and German stages. His collected works have been published in twenty-five volumes, and several novels have appeared in German translation.

LIKE birds. Like in a dream. Like three hundred years ago. Carts and peasant women in the carts. Peasants standing about clad in the traditional peasant blouse. Horses out of the shafts. A smell of oats. A drizzle of rain. The sky looks full of smoke. Grey-blue clouds, motionless, congealed. All round the carts and in between them, a moving crowd, filling the market place, jostling the buyers who pass in rows along the kerb. One has a shirt over his arm, a second a suit of clothes, a third carries a samovar, a fourth an old skirt, a fifth a torn sheet. Once upon a time they were all rich, these people, well-to-do.

They have been walking up and down like this since early in the morning. All are shabby, in rags, pitiful to see, worn out and worried looking. Gentlemen and courtiers, stately dames and aristocratic young girls. Like the old-clothes dealers of other days they go up and down the street, carrying with them everything they possess. One after the other they go, self-effacing people, humiliated-looking, threading their way among the carts from which the peasant women look down on them with contempt. Past the bearded moujiks. The air is filled with strident voices.

Like birds. Like in a dream.

Straight as a stick, his beard unkempt, wearing a short coat, his toes showing through his shoes, looking as if he was holding up the grey clouds with his angular shoulders, the one-time public prosecutor for the district, Ivan Feodorowitch Wosdrikov runs up and down the market place, as he has been doing all day since

early in the morning. His big broad nose, full of blue spots, ■ swollen with the cold and with wrath. His head, under the covering of his Bolshevik cap, aches with the constant drip-drip of the rain beating down on it all day long. Nobody there appears to want his trousers, the trousers of his evening dress suit which he carries slung over his arm. People only buy things for ordinary, everyday use. But he hasn't got anything else to sell. It ■ all that has been left to him, the trousers of his evening dress suit. "Clods, pigs, dolts," he mumbles to himself with indignation. "They won't buy anything from me. Curse them! Public prosecutor, that's what I was! What for? What's the good of being a public prosecutor? I used to despise the bootmaker, didn't I, idiot that I was! Why didn't I learn to be a bootmaker?"

He walked up to a fat peasant woman and without speaking a word displayed his trousers, appeal and inquiry in his eyes. She shook her head. Then she tucked her face in the collar of her fur coat and looked down at him with contemptuous amusement. Her husband, as yellow-looking as his horse, clambered heavily down from his cart with a sack of oats in his hands. He let out a stream of breath through his nostrils and mouth. "Bourgeois!" he muttered, and turned away with disgust to attend to his horse.

Mme. Bernstein, once a wealthy lady, courteously made way for Wosdrikov and took up her stand next to the peasant woman. She looked faded with the rain. In a wheedling voice she said: "My dear, will you please buy my samovar?" Wosdrikov overheard her. He shrugged his shoulders and gave vent to an angry epithet. "That Chaika again!" he said. "Wherever you go you get these Chaikas and Israels. Here she comes along with her samovar. Of course, she's sure to sell a samovar. That's why no one wants to buy my trousers. They won't let us live, these cursed Jews!"

Yellow as a piece of wax, frightened-looking and dishevelled, the former high school inspector Safron Matveiewitch Soucharouk, suddenly dived up as if out of the sea. He had with him a hat to sell. Seeing Wosdrikov with his evening dress trousers over his arm, he gave a squeak of delight.

"My dear friend Ivan Feodorowitch, you've got trousers? And I've got a hat. My very dear friend, last week I sold my tunic to a caretaker. He bought it because of the buttons. He

thought they were gold buttons, but for the life of me I can't get anyone to buy my hat."

"It's all the fault of the Jews," grumbled Wosdrikov. "Unfair competition, that's what it is. You come here hoping to sell your trousers, and that Chaika comes along with a samovar. What chance have you got to sell your trousers, I ask you, when she goes following you about with that confounded samovar of hers. And if I come back home with these trousers still slung over my arm, my wife will simply go into hysterics. And it's all the fault of those Jews."

"It's the peasants," insisted Soucharouk. "The Revolution—the peasants, that's one. The Czar—the peasants, that's two. Denikin—the peasants, that's three. I tell you, my dear friend, it's the peasants."

"But who organised it?" asked Wosdrikov. "The Jews! The Isaacs, and the Trotskys, and the Abrahams. They did it. Why do you want to throw dust in my eyes? Who was it that let the peasant loose from his chain? The Jew! There wouldn't have been a Revolution if it had not been for the Chaikas and the Israels. But we'll pay them out for that. We'll have our revenge on them."

"But, my dear friend," Matveiewitch tried to calm him. "Be fair."

"What's the use of your fairness and your justice," interrupted Wosdrikov impatiently, "when we've got these Jews round our necks. Do you know, things have come to such a pass that my own wife is urging me to go and join the Bolsheviks. Perepiolkin has gone over to them, she says, and his family is having a fine time of it now. I tell her that Perepiolkin is a swine and that before he is finished he'll be hanged on a tree, and she brings up Pasinkov and Sheluszhnik, and Ivanzov. And you tell me it isn't the fault of the Jews!"

He looked up appealingly into the face of a peasant woman who passed by, pointing dumbly to his trousers. She glanced down at them and said, "Go along with you now. Who wants your bourgeois trousers?"

"Fie," exclaimed Wosdrikov, when she had passed. "That's the result of Trotsky's teachings."

"Trotsky is a genius," Soucharouk remarked quietly. "Whatever else you may think of him, there's no doubt about that."

"And why should the Jews have all the geniuses," cried Wosdrikov angrily. "■ we had Trotsky and they had Denikin, we would have smashed the Revolution in half an hour. Whom did we have on our side, I ask you? Idiots and fools! I hate them! But never mind. My day will come yet. We'll massacre those Jews! I'll take a hatchet and I'll go from house to house, killing them. I shan't leave a single Jew alive, not one!"

He suddenly bent down, looked round furtively, and whispered into Soucharouk's ear. "The army ■ ready," he whispered. "All the Jews have been pushed out already. No Jews in the army now. That's a good sign, isn't it? They're pushing out the Jews everywhere. We will kill all the Jews, every one of them, and then we will take back our own, and we'll have our Nicholas on the throne again."

"What Nicholas?" asked Soucharouk puzzled.

"He is alive, our Czar Nicholas," replied Wosdrikov. "I was told by someone who knows. He is hidden somewhere in a monastery, with the Czarewitch."

"And then I will be an inspector again!" cried Soucharouk excitedly.

"Of course you will," said Wosdrikov. "You will be inspector again, and I shall be public prosecutor again. Just think of it, my friend. Just imagine it! I shall stand up in the court once more and conduct prosecutions. Won't I pay out those Jews! And the peasants will be put back on their chain, tied up; everything will be nice and quiet, just as it used to be. I shall go to the court every day. And the governor-general will ride out in his carriage and pair through the town. It will be fine!"

"How splendid!" ejaculated Soucharouk, his eyes blazing ecstatically.

"Yes, but I haven't sold my trousers yet," Wosdrikov sighed, suddenly recalling himself to reality. "My wife is sitting at home in the cold, and starving. Frozen potatoes are all that we get to eat. Twice I have been imprisoned in the Tcheka, and what on earth am I to do with these accursed trousers? Devil take them! Why must they be evening dress trousers?"

"Suppose we go to the Jews after all," Soucharouk ventured falteringly. "Here they stand along the pavement. The moujik won't buy. Perhaps the Jews will buy from us."

"Those Jews again," Wosdrikov growled in a tone of hatred.

"Without the Jews I suppose we're not good for anything. Without the Jews we can't do anything. That's what's come to our Russia. Without the Jews we can't do anything."

"Nothing, my dear friend," Soucharouk chimed in. "Nothing at all. I am a just man. They must not be killed. ■ you kill a Jew it ■ the same as if you killed your father."

"Don't! Don't!" Wosdrikov interrupted, turning on him angrily.

"It ■ true, dear friend. The best thing is to deal with the Jews. You will buy from them cheaper and sell dearer than anywhere else. If you go to one of your own he won't even look at you. You understand. He is one of your own, so he'll skin you. The Jew is a business man."

"I hate them," Wosdrikov growled.

"My dear friend, to you is it not the same who buys your trousers, a Jew or a moujik?" asked Soucharouk.

"Yes, that is the point," answered Wosdrikov. "It is not the same thing, and yet I must go to the Jews. That's how they've arranged things. What can I do? I must give way."

Both went up to a dealer, who was busy at the moment with a woman who was selling him a cloak. They stood there, waiting humbly, patiently, and did not speak to each other.

"Do you want to sell something?" the dealer asked, when he was finished with the woman.

"Trousers, comrade," Wosdrikov answered. "Absolutely new trousers. Perhaps you'd like to buy them."

"I might," the dealer answered in a friendly tone. "Why not? What do you think I am standing here for in the rain—to make an exhibition of myself? Of course I will buy, if it's something worth buying."

He took the trousers, and examined them, and Wosdrikov straight away became happier. Soucharouk fidgeted with his hat to attract to it the dealer's attention.

"Well, and how much do you want for your trousers?" the dealer asked. Wosdrikov confusedly mumbled a sum. "Perhaps you'll take a little less? No? Very well. Chana," the dealer turned to his daughter. "Take hold of these trousers."

Wosdrikov beamed. Soucharouk sold his hat also. Both felt easier when the deal was finished. Bread and potatoes, bread and potatoes, a little salt as well, and a little tea. There would be a

meal soon at home. That was the thought running through both their minds.

"You see, friend Wosdrikov," Soucharouk said as they moved away. "A splendid people, the Jews! The people of the Bible. What do you want of them? Is it their fault that Trotsky is a Jew! Trotsky is one, and they are thousands. I haven't had a smoke for two days. I can buy a few cigarettes now. A splendid people, I tell you. What do you think he wants my hat for? What can he do with it? But he bought it all the same."

"He will wear that hat on Saturdays and go to Synagogue in it with his Chaika," Wosdrikov laughingly replied, full of joy that to-day he would have bread and potatoes for dinner, and his wife would receive him happily when he came home, not as always with reproaches. He turned round to give a last look at the dealer. He even wanted to smile at him. But he pulled himself up sharply, a little angrily, took the ex-inspector by the arm and both wended their way out of the crowd.

The market continued in a turmoil. Crowds passed up and down the pavement, and the rain drizzled down.

## EDMÉE

*By* VLADIMIR JABOTINSKY

Vladimir Jabotinsky, author, journalist, orator and Zionist politician. President of the Zionist-Revisionist World Union. Born 1880 in Odessa, South Russia. Won his reputation as a Russian publicist before he was out of his 'teens. Joined the Zionist movement when he was nineteen. Became one of the leaders of the Russian Zionists. Organised the Jewish Battalion that fought in the British Army in Palestine, and held His Majesty's Commission. Organised the Jewish Self-Defence in Palestine against the pogrom in 1920, and was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment for unlawfully carrying arms, but was released as a result of protests made by Jews all over the world. A Russian stylist, his Russian translations of Bialik's poems are famous. Has also published original poems. Translated Dante into Hebrew. Published in 1928 a novel, "Samson," that has appeared in several languages, including English.

THE East? It is entirely foreign to me. Here you have a living repudiation of your theories about race and the call of blood. I was born a Westerner in spite of the tell-tale shape of my nose. Still, once I, too, decided to have a look at the Orient. Quite possibly, it was in part the effect of what you would call racial resentment. You know, certain prejudices still hold considerable sway with us in Germany. I may say without any false modesty that I have long reached the stage when one naturally expects to fill a University chair: I understand that even your Russian specialists have heard of my anatomy research work. Most professors of the faculty are my close friends, and I know that they would be only too glad to welcome me in their midst. But the Prussian Ministry has its own ways and means of influence, against which all academic autonomy is powerless. I could have got a readership, but you will agree that at my time of life, with my reputation, that would have been awkward. My Berlin friends tried to intervene, but were given to understand that the question had better be "postponed." I was really hurt, so much so that I found it difficult to concentrate on my work. You may

ask : was there not a very simple way out, since it was only a question of religion ? Well, as to that, I am by no means a fanatic, and have never had any actual connection with the observing community, but there are certain things which repel me aesthetically, and apostasy is one of them. There was nothing to do but to resign myself ; and to get the thing out of my head I went East. I repeat that this choice of place may have been partly influenced by a sub-conscious protest of racial feeling : you insult me, and to spite you I go to that quarter of the compass from where my people came. I did not go far, however ; contenting myself with Constantinople.

It was there that I became definitely convinced that mine is the Westerner's mentality. At the risk of your thinking me devoid of any sense of beauty, at the risk, worse still, of your classing me with those who try to be original, I must confess that I did not like Constantinople at all. To begin with the celebrated Bosphorus. I cannot stand that crude brilliance, that sun which knows no half-tones, no shades ; and daubs with coarse, screaming colours like a pavement artist. Believe me, our Hartz or Schwarzwald abound in scenery infinitely more beautiful than the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. Our sun is more refined, more distinguished, made to suit a well-bred taste. As to the city itself, it is simply impossible. I have nothing against tortuous, up-and-down by-streets ; they constitute the main charm of many a fascinating ancient borough in our German South ; but there must be in addition some sort of architecture, style, tone. The little streets of Stamboul, in my opinion, are merely ugly. An artist who went round the town with me was quite delighted ; but I am inclined to think that was snobbishness. And the mob ! One sees noisy colourful crowds in Naples or Seville, but there is always about them some nobility, some inborn dignity both in colour and tumult, and they never degenerate into what one meets in the East—a sort of permanent row of a yelling rabble dressed up in savage-painted rags. No, my aesthetics are those of a Westerner, a European. This leaven is so strong in me that even my romantic adventure there was inspired by a daughter of the West, and permeated with Occidental wistfulness—*von einem Hauch westlicher Schwaermerei*. For I did have a romantic adventure, despite my fifty-two years, my social position and my natural aloofness from feminine society. True, it was a very

innocent romance ; at the time, I did not even suspect its romantic side—that realisation came only when it was over.

I went to live on the Princes Isles. Strictly speaking, the only spots of Constantinople fit for human habitation are the luxurious hotels of Therapia and Buyouk-Deré, where one meets many Europeans and hardly any natives, and where there is little to remind one of Constantinople. But those places have one drawback : they are situated on the Bosphorus, and the Bosphorus scenery is supposed to be their main charm ; and I have already told you that, to me, this hideous thoroughfare of a strait, with its blue-blotched sea and its green-blotched shores was unbearable. I took rooms on Prinkipo. I do not deny it is a pretty little island, but it ought to be taken away from the Turks and made to look like something respectable—a sort of Ruegen of the South. I lived in the Hotel Giacomo, and it was there I met her. Her name was Edmée, and she was twelve years old.

Meals were served on the terrace, overlooking the sea, on little tables. Near me was the table of a French Consul and his family ; his post was in a small provincial port, and they had come here on holiday. Husband and wife were Parisians ; the younger children were born in Turkey, but Edmée had first seen the light in Paris and had lived there until she was four. It is not much, but do not make light of the imprint of Europe ! It tells. It only needs a tiny crack and a fraction of a second to strike root, to leave its mark. How it happens I do not know. There is something mystic about it. Edmée remembered hardly anything of Paris ; she was being brought up somewhere in Dedeagatch, together with the daughters of Levantines ; but the stamp of the West was all over her, and she seemed an embodiment of refined Occidental culture *in partibus infidelium*.

I had not yet introduced myself to her family ; we only bowed to each other ; but from the first she impressed me. She stood out. Our hotel was full of Levantines. What a set, what a race ! One hears so much of the levelling influence of America, of the great melting-pot where peoples and tribes mix and are merged into the one American nation. But no one seems to have noticed that something very similar is going on in the European quarters of Constantinople, Cairo, Alexandria. The sawdust of all countries, carried by the winds of business, lawful or otherwise, mix there and create a new people—the Levantine. In Constantinople

they have a special nickname for that ethnological curio—Pérotte, after the Péra suburb where these “Europeans” dwell. Do you know the pedigree of an average Pérotte family? The father is an Italian born of a Croat and a Swedish woman; the mother a Greek born of a Polish *émigré* and a Roumanian gipsy; they have a Spanish passport and talk French at home. Try to imagine the bouquet. Try to imagine the spiritual atmosphere in which they bring up their children, that grocer’s blend of traditions, prejudices, habits grown under different latitudes, inharmonious, incongruous, incommensurate. How can they graft upon their brood anything in the nature of a civic attitude, when they themselves live outside the pale of citizenship? Cube the idea of No-Man’s-Land and you will get a remote suggestion of that peculiar mentality, with the nerve of patriotism totally atrophied. The result is bottomless egoism, self-satisfied obtuseness, a complete absence of any stimulus inspired by public interest, ignorance, and, to crown it all, rank ill-breeding, the birthright of every *milieu* that has lost tradition. This is what they are, and so are their children. Amidst these surroundings Edmée, if one may still quote Shakespeare, showed a snowy dove trooping with crows.

Edmée was blonde; she had a nice little face, nothing more. Her figure was slim, quite childish still, extremely graceful. She was dressed simply and attractively; betraying the hand of a capable mother, possessed of good taste, and an excellent journal devoted to children’s fashions. Her companions, Levantine girls of the same age, who played with her on the terrace and in the garden were almost all of them much prettier; also, they were already quite the little women, dressed even in a way that would accentuate the nascent outlines of girlhood. The girls themselves seemed aware of it, and darted enticing glances at the young males in the hotel. In this setting Edmée seemed a being from a higher plane. There was much more carefree enjoyment, light-hearted sparkle in her play; but her merriment was never noisy, her sallies never crude. It was breeding assimilated into the very blood. In watching her I began to believe what I had never admitted before—that there really are quite normal, healthy, even intelligent girls who develop in quiet unconsciousness, inaccessible to the fugitive touch of any disturbing thought, immune even from curiosity. A system of upbringing evolved in

the course of centuries, tested by the experience of many generations, has so directed their mind that it instinctively shrinks from points which might be dangerous to approach. These girls mature oblivious of their ripening ; with them the tempests of the transition age sweep by somewhere beyond the sphere of realisation ; they grow in healthy serenity, unconscious of anything, curious about nothing.

But even at that time Edmée was no longer a child. I grew aware of it watching her at the side of her little sister, who was about two years younger. That child had a different way of treating her boy playmates ; there was more chumminess, more unconcern, and she was herself like a boy. Edmée was already beginning to impose distances. She still bowed first to the young men of the hotel and did not mind if they addressed her with the familiar " thou," but I noticed that in contact with men something within her drew back, tightened, sprang to the defensive. She did not know it ; but I could see. The great gravitation whose first symptoms, by the strange and wise will of nature, take the form of repulsion, was already dimly stirring in the recesses of her soul, impenetrable to her own mind. Her figure was childish, but her gestures, carriage, her way of stooping, of rising on tiptoe, of halting suddenly in the chase—all suggested a richer age.

As I got to know her better it struck me that this is, perhaps, the most beautiful stage in a woman's development. Not of all women, of course. There is also the famous type of the *Back-fisch* girl, red hands and angular manners ; I assure you, however, that the farther west you go, and the higher up on the rungs of civilisation, the less you meet it. But there are natures with whom the crisis slides edgeless, inward, under the skin. In them the first teens is *the* age—the most fascinating, the most lyrical, the most aromatic. If I may generalise, April to me is lovelier than May. Where Nature insensibly works her mystic transitions from stage to stage, there you can—shall I say—more tangibly breathe the balm of elemental sacrament, feel the fanning touch of God Who passes by, with the magic wand in His hand. There you dimly guess myriads of miraculous possibilities, none of which, probably, will ever be realised. Three beautiful things God has created : childhood, youth and woman. Think how sublimely exquisite must be the moment when these three beautiful things

interweave—when in the soul and the body of a woman childhood glides into youth. But for my fear that you may take me, *Gott bewahre*, for a dealer in paradox, I should say that, strictly speaking, a woman begins to grow old after the age of fourteen. But perhaps it all comes of my being a stubborn bachelor who has seen few women in his time. Quite possibly.

We became friends. Before sunset, when the children stopped playing, Edmée used to join me in the garden, with her doll or hoop or skipping-rope still in her hand ; and we talked. She spoke both like a child and like a woman. She chattered of all the trifles of a child's life, of games, of her boarding school ; spun charming gossamer scandal about her friends, here and at school, of their families and governesses, told me of her pranks—graceful little pranks ; and then suddenly slid on to serious problems—good and evil, God. She was in favour of capital punishment for murderers and political offenders, and also for men who abandon wife and children for a new love. She could not understand how it was possible to forgive betrayal ; at school a friend had deserted her for another girl, and Edmée would never in her life speak to her again. She had made André, her younger brother, swear that if her husband should ever betray her, André, summoned by cable from Singapore, where by that time he would be French consul, would immediately come and kill the man.

But whatever the subject of her conversation, whether it was Mr. Sun Yat-sen of China or her own friend Cléo, who was such a greedy girl, she had the poise of a grown-up woman. One day, two men came to spend the afternoon with me on the island ; I introduced them to Edmée, and she gave them the same impression. She was not shy, yet at first she was evidently taking stock of them and only answered when spoken to ; but she gradually thawed—and we had a perfect illusion of a clever little hostess entertaining her *salon*. She was sometimes gay, sometimes serious ; she set us riddles, asked questions about Russia (my guests were Russians), chatted about the town where papa was consul. One of my friends was a grey-haired professor ; at dusk she inquired whether it was not too damp for him, and whether he would not like a rug. But the other was what I should call a young man, about thirty-seven, with a much appreciated beard ; and I noticed that Edmée scanned him once or twice with a certain degree of scrutiny ; her manner with him was more

reserved ; she avoided addressing him direct ; her answers to him were more brief, and her voice was veiled.

A week after, Edmée came to me in the garden without her doll and hoop, and told me that they were leaving next day. I felt inexpressibly sad, so sad that I had to scold myself inwardly. What nonsense ! I was fifty-two ; I could not have fallen in love with that baby ; on the other hand I was not yet as decrepit as our King David of old, in whom only the warmth of another's youth could keep the pulsation of life going. In this way, I expostulated with myself, but it hurt ; and Edmée read it in my face. She grew suddenly still and gazed at me steadily, without so much as a flicker of an eyelash ; her blue eyes darkened ; for a moment it seemed as if she were going to cry ; for a moment it seemed as if she were going to climb up on the garden bench and throw her arms around my neck. But she did neither ; she only put her hand very gently on my sleeve, and said in a strange, still, concentrated chest voice I had never heard nor suspected, the voice of a woman who had long understood everything :

" I shall miss you, too, my only friend in Prinkipo."

I confess that I almost made a movement to kiss her hand ; but drew back in time. I am sure it would not have surprised her ; but I felt that it would not do. I did not even stroke her hair. I swallowed a funny lump which stuck in my throat, and said, just in order to say something, with a wry smile :

" Am I your only friend here, Edmée ? What about your play-mates ? What of Cléo ?

And then she answered me in these words, which still ring in my ears. I am not sure that I ought to repeat them to you : you are quite capable of making use of them for one of your favourite harangues about the sacrosanct hedges that cut humanity into sections. Well, it doesn't matter. You know the story, so you may as well know the end of it. She said :

" Oh, Cléo. . . . You see—she is a Jewess. What I hate about Prinkipo is that there are so many Jews about. They are so vulgar. I can't stand them, can you ? "

## THE RABBI'S SON

By ISAAC BABEL

*Translated by JOHN HARLAND*

Isaac Babel, born in Odessa, 1894. When he was three years old, the family moved to Nikolaev, but during the pogroms of 1905, they had to flee, and returned to Odessa. He took his degree in 1914 at the University of Saratov. In 1916 he was in Petrograd. Jews were not allowed to live there, but he managed with the aid of false passports. Here he wrote his first published stories which appeared in Gorki's paper, "Annals." He was prosecuted for inciting to class-hatred, but owing to the revolution the charges were never heard. In 1920 he joined the army, being probably the first Jew to serve in the Cossacks. He fought in the Soviet-Polish War of 1920. His stories of Jewish life in Odessa, among the gangsters, workers and merchants, are full of vigour and intimate knowledge of the life.

Babel's work has been described as among the most significant that has come from Soviet Russia. Prince Mirsky has said that "his stories of the Polish campaign of 1920 are the most *perfect* work by any Russian prose writer since the revolution. He has an extraordinary command of dialect, and the very personal art of permeating the horror and squalor of war with the thrill and poetry of heroism, while never for a moment letting one forget the horror and squalor."

ON the eve of Sabbath I am oppressed by the deep melancholy of memories. In bygone days my grandfather would stroke the volumes of Ibn Ezra with his yellow beard, and my grandmother, in a lace cap, would trace fortunes with her knotty fingers over the Sabbath lights, and wail softly to herself. Those evenings my child's heart was rocked like a little ship upon enchanted waves. Oh, the rotted old *Talmuds* of my childhood! Oh, the deep melancholy of memories!

I roam through Jitomir in search of a shy star. By the ancient Synagogue, by its yellow and indifferent walls, old Jews with prophets' beards and the rags of passion on their sunken chests sell chalk and wicks and washing blue.

Here, before me, is the bazaar. Gone is the fat soul of plenty. Dumb locks hang upon the booths and the granite of the bridge

■ as clean as a skull. My shy star twinkles and fades out of sight.

Success came to me later on. Success came before sunset. Ghedali's little shop was hidden away in a row of others, all hermetically closed. Where was your kindly shade, Dickens, that day? You would have seen in that little old curiosity shop, gilt slippers, ships' cables, an ancient compass, a stuffed eagle, a Winchester with the date 1810 engraved upon it and a broken saucepan.

Old Ghedali, the little proprietor in smoked glasses and a green frock-coat down to the ground, meanders round his treasures in a roseate void of evening. He rubs his small white hands, plucks at his little grey beard and listens to mysterious voices wafted down to him.

The shop is like the box of an important, knowledge-loving little boy who will grow up to be a professor of botany. There are buttons in it and a dead butterfly and its small owner goes by the name of Ghedali. All had abandoned the bazaar; but Ghedali had stayed on. He winds in and out of a labyrinth of globes, skulls and dead flowers, waving a bright feather duster of cock's plumes and blowing dust off the dead flowers.

And so we sit upon small beer-barrels, Ghedali twisting and untwisting his pointed beard. Like a little black tower, his hat sways above him. Warm air flows past us. The sky changes colour. Blood, delicate-hued, pours down from an overturned bottle above, and a vague odour of corruption enfolds me.

"The Revolution—we say yes to it, but can it be that we are to say no to the Sabbath?" begins Ghedali, winding about me the bands of his smoky eyes. "Yes, I cry to the Revolution; yes, I cry to it, but it hides its face from Ghedali and sends only shooting ahead——"

"The sunlight doesn't come into eyes that are closed," I answered the old man. "But we will force open those closed eyes——"

"The Poles closed my eyes," whispered the old man, in a voice that was barely audible. "The Poles are bad-tempered dogs. They take the Jew and tear at his beard, the curs! And now they are being beaten, the bad-tempered dogs. That is splendid, that is the Revolution. And then those who beat the Poles say to me: 'Give your gramophone up for a possible

requisition, Ghedali——' I am fond of music, Pane, I tell the Revolution. 'You don't know what it is you are fond of, Ghedali; we'll shoot you and then you'll know. We cannot do without shooting because we're the Revolution.' "

"It cannot do without shooting, Ghedali," I tell the old man, "because it is the Revolution."

"But the Poles, kind Pane, shot because they were the counter-Revolution. You shoot because you are the Revolution. But surely the Revolution means joy. And joy does not like orphans in the home. Good men do good deeds. The Revolution is the good deed of good men. But good men do not kill. That means it is bad people who are making the Revolution. But the Poles are bad people too. Then how is Ghedali to tell which is the Revolution and which is the counter-Revolution? I used to study the *Talmud* and love Raschi's commentaries and the books of Maimonides. And there are yet other understanding folk in Jitomir. And here we are all of us learned people, falling on our faces and crying out in a loud voice: 'Woe unto us, where is the joy-giving Revolution?'"

The old man grew silent. And we saw the first star pierce through the Milky Way.

"The Sabbath has begun," Ghedali stated with solemnity, "Jews should be going to the Synagogue. Pane comrade," he said, rising, his top hat, like a little black tower, swaying on his head, "bring a few good people to Jitomir. Oh, there's a scarcity of good people in our town, oh, what a scarcity! Bring them along and we will give up all our gramophones to them. We are not ignoramuses. The International—we know what the International is. And I want an International of good people. I would like every soul to be taken into account and given first category rations. There, soul, please eat and enjoy life's pleasures. Pane comrade, you don't know what the International is eaten with——"

"It is eaten with powder," I answered the old man, "and flavoured with the best blood."

And then, from out of the blue gloom, the young Sabbath came to take her seat of honour.

"Ghedali," I said, "to-day ■ Friday and it's already evening. Where are Jewish biscuits to be got and a Jewish glass of tea and a little of that retired God in a glass of tea?"

"Not ■ be had," Ghedali replied, hanging up the lock on his little booth. "Not ■ be had. Next door is a tavern, and they were good people who served in it, but nobody eats there now, one weeps there."

He buttoned up his green frock-coat on three bone buttons, flicked himself with the cock's feathers, sprinkled a little water on his soft palms and left me—a tiny, lonely visionary in a black top hat, carrying a big prayer-book under his arm.

The Sabbath is coming. Ghedali, the founder of an impossible International, has gone into the Synagogue to pray.

"... ALL is mortal. Only the mother is destined to immortality. And when the mother is no longer among the living, she leaves a memory which none yet have dared to sully. The memory of the mother feeds a compassion in us that is like the ocean—and the illimitable ocean feeds the rivers that dissect the universe—"

Such were Ghedali's words. He uttered them with great solemnity. The dying evening surrounded him with the rose-tinted haze of its sadness.

The old man said: "The passionate building of Chassidism has had its doors and windows burst open, but it is as immortal as the soul of the mother. With oozing orbits Chassidism still stands at the cross-road of the turbulent winds of history."

Thus spoke Ghedali. And, having come to the end of his prayers in the Synagogue, he took me to Rabbi Motaley—to the last Rabbi of the Tchernobyiskaya dynasty.

We went up the main street, Ghedali and I. White churches gleamed in the distance like fields of buckwheat. The wheel of a gun-carriage groaned at a corner. A couple of pregnant Ukrainian women came out of a gateway, jingling their coin necklaces and sat down on a bench. In the orange strife of the sunset a timid star lit up, and peace—Sabbath peace—rested upon the crazy roofs of the Jitomir ghetto.

"Here," whispered Ghedali, and pointed out a tall building with a broken frontal.

We entered a room, stony and empty, like a morgue. Rabbi Motaley was sitting at a table round which were assembled liars and possessed. He wore a white dressing-gown drawn round

him by a cord and a sable cap on his head. The Rabbi sat with closed eyes, digging his thin fingers into the yellow down of his beard.

"Where do you come from, Jew?" he asked, raising his eyelids.

"From Odessa," I answered.

"A God-fearing town," said the Rabbi suddenly with unexpected vehemence—"the star of our exile and, against its will, the well of our distress. What is your occupation, Jew?"

"I am putting the adventures of Hersch of Ostropol into verse."

"A great task," murmured the Rabbi and closed his eyelids. "The jackal whines when he is hungry; every fool has folly enough for despondency and only the wise man can tear the veil of being with his laughter. . . . What are you studying, Jew?"

"The Bible."

"What are you seeking, Jew?"

"Entertainment."

"Reb Mordkhey," said the Tzadik and shook his beard, "let the young man sit down at the table, let him eat with all the other Jews this Sabbath eve, let him rejoice that he is alive and not dead, let him clap his hands when his neighbours dance, let him drink wine if he is given any——"

And up darted Mordkhey, a jester of old—a hunch-backed old man with turned-up eyelids, no taller than a boy of ten.

"Oh, my dear and so very young man," said the ragged Reb Mordkhey, winking at me, "Oh, how many rich fools I used to know in Odessa! And how many penniless wise men I used to know in Odessa! Do sit down at the table, young man, and drink the wine you won't be given——"

We all of us seated ourselves side by side—possessed, liars, and idlers. In a corner, some broad-shouldered Jews who resembled fishermen and apostles were moaning over their prayer-books. Ghedali, in his green frock-coat down to the ground, was dozing by the wall like a little bright bird. And suddenly I caught sight of a youth behind him—a youth with the face of Spinoza, with Spinoza's powerful forehead, and the face of a nun. He was smoking and starting like a prisoner brought back after pursuit to his cell. The ragged Reb Mordkhey crept up to him from behind, snatched the cigarette from his mouth and ran away, to me.

"That's Ilya, the Rabbi's son," he declared hoarsely, bringing his bloodshot eyelids close to my face. "That's the cursed son, the last son, the unruly son."

And Mordkhey shook his fist at the youth and spat in his face.

"Blessed be the Lord," rang out the voice of Rabbi Motaley Bratzlavsky who proceeded to break the bread with his monkish fingers. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who has chosen us from among the nations of the earth."

The Rabbi blessed the food and we sat down at the table. Beyond the window horses were neighing and Cossacks shouting. The wilderness of war yawned beyond the window. In the midst of the silence and prayers the Rabbi's son went on smoking one cigarette after another. When the supper came to an end I was the first to rise.

"My dear and so very young man," muttered Mordkhey after me, pulling me by the belt, "if there were nobody in the world beside the evil rich and the needy vagabonds, how would the saints live?"

I gave the old man some money and went out into the street. I took leave of Ghedali and went on my way to the station. In the agit-train<sup>1</sup> of the 1st Cavalry Army there awaited me the flare of innumerable lights, the magical brilliance of the wireless station, the stubborn coursing of the printing machines and my unfinished article for the paper, *The Red Trooper*.

Do you remember Jitomir, Vassili? Do you remember the Teterev and that night, Vassili, when the young Sabbath glided along the sunset, crushing the stars beneath her little red heel?

The slender horn of the moon bathed its darts in the dark waters of the Teterev. Queer old Ghedali, the founder of the IVth International, led us to the Rabbi Motaley Bratzlavsky for the evening prayer. Queer old Ghedali shook the cock's feather of his top hat in the ruddy haze of the evening. His ravenous pupils blinked in the Rabbi's room. Heavy shouldered Jews groaned, bent over prayer-books, and the old buffoon of the Tchernobylskaya Tzadiks jingled coppers in his frayed pocket.

Do you remember that night, Vassili? Beyond the window horses were neighing and Cossacks shouting. The wilderness of

<sup>1</sup>Agit-train—army train for purposes of political propaganda.

war yawned beyond the window, and Rabbi Motaley Bratzlavsky prayed beside the eastern wall, digging his fingers into his talis. Then the curtain of the ark was drawn aside and we saw in the funereal candle-light the *Torah* rolls, sheathed in covers of purple velvet and blue silk, and, bowed above the *Torahs*—inanimate and resigned—the beautiful face of Ilya, the Rabbi's son, last prince of the dynasty.

Well, only the day before yesterday, Vassili, the regiments of the XIIth Army extended the front lines to Kovel. The conqueror's bombardment thundered over the town disdainfully. The polissection train crawled over the dead back of the fields. And a monstrous and inconceivable Russia tramped on either side of the carriages in bast shoes, like a multitude of bugs swarming in clothes. The typhus-ridden peasantry rolled before in the usual hump of its soldier's death; it jumped up on the steps of our train and fell back, knocked down by the butt-ends of our rifles; it snorted and scrabbled and flowed on in silence.

At the twelfth verst, when I had no potatoes left I flung Trotsky's leaflets at them. But only one man among them stretched a dead, dirty hand to catch those leaflets. And I recognised Ilya, son of the Rabbi of Jitomir. I recognised him at once, Vassili. And it was so heartrending to see the Prince losing his trousers and doubled up beneath his soldier's pack, that we defied the regulations and pulled him up into our carriage.

His bare knees—frail as an old woman's—knocked against the rusty iron of the steps. Two full-bosomed typists in sailor suits trailed along the floor the long, shamed body of the dying man. We laid him in a corner of the editor's office, on the floor; and Cossacks in red, loose trousers set straight the clothes that were dropping off him. The girls rested their bandy legs—legs of dull-witted females—on the floor, and stared at him. And I who had seen him on one of my nights of roaming, began to lay in a case the shattered belongings of the Red Army soldier, Bratzlavsky.

His things were strewn about pell-mell—mandates of the propagandist and memorandum books of the Jewish poet; the portraits of Lenin and Maimonides lay side by side: the knotted iron of Lenin's skull beside the dull silk of the portraits of Maimonides. A lock of a woman's hair lay in a book, the Resolutions of the Party's Sixth Congress, and the margins of

Communist leaflets were crowded with the crooked lines of Hebrew verse. They fell upon me in a mean, depressing rain—pages of the *Song of Songs* and those revolver cartridges. The dreary rain of evening washed the dust from my hair and I said to the boy who was lying on a wretched mattress in the corner, dying :

"One Friday evening, four months ago, the antiquary Ghedali took me to your father, Rabbi Motaley, but you didn't belong to the Party at that time, Bratslavsky——"

"I did," the boy answered, scratching his chest and tossing in fever, "only I couldn't leave my mother."

"And now, Ilya?"

"When there's a revolution on—a mother's an episode," he whispered, less and less audibly. "My letter came, the letter B, and I was sent to the front——"

"And you got to Kovel, Ilya?"

"I got to Kovel!" he cried in despair. "The profiteers let the enemy through the front. I took over the command of a scratch regiment, but too late. . . . I hadn't enough artillery——"

He died before we reached Rovno. He—the last of the princes—died amidst his poetry, phylacteries and coarse linen leggings. We buried him at some forgotten station or other. And I, who can scarce contain the tempests of my imagination within this primeval body of mine, was there beside my brother when he breathed his last.

## **DUTCH SECTION**

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## POP

By HERMAN HEYERMANS

*Translated by A. VAN SON*

Herman Heyermans, born in Rotterdam, December, 1864, died at Zandvoort, November 1924. World-famous dramatist. Many of his plays have been translated into French, German and English, and have been performed in most European countries, and in America. He also wrote a number of novels, and about eight hundred short stories, under the pseudonym "Samuel Falkland." There is a Heyermans Steet in Amsterdam and a statue erected to him by the City Council.

THERE were six of them in the room.

At about the same time the twelve eyelids flickered.

The eyelids flickered, flickered like nervous forelocks, trembled like blades of grass in a North-East wind, quaked spasmodically, lay down to rest for a while yearningly, then began to dance once more.

Aunt Rebecca kept her little eyes closed in the hills of her pale bulging cheeks. She closed them forcefully, leaving hardly a chink for the light to steal in. She lay hidden in the old armchair, her fingers fumbling among the worn mock-velvet. She grasped the chair and closed her eyes tight. And she pressed her lips together, so that the wrinkles in the skin round her mouth straightened.

Aunt Dora, behind the armchair, looked as if she saw the yellow flaming sun set far away into the sea, and could not bear the blinding rays of light. The whole of her peaked old-woman's face seemed to crowd round the thin nose. Her eyes walked towards the nose, her cheeks toddled towards the nose, her chin trudged towards the nose. Her pale face looked like a row of cackling people, with a man in the middle explaining matters. That man was the nose. And the eyes flickered with an expression of dismay as if the man told a story about servant-girls being murdered and burglaries committed in the night. And her whole face looked as if the reflection of the setting sun irritated it.

Sarah, who sat near the stove, reacted differently to what was

going on. She was shaking with laughter, so that the table shook, too, and the glasses joined in the game. She was laughing, and her eyes flickered as much as Rebecca's and Dora's. Sarah's eyes, with their thick eyelids, were flickering in the small freckled face, on which her hair danced for company like a loose lace curtain, when the wind is blowing. Her eyes flickered with a will, but she kept her hand over her eyebrows, ready to flap down the lids in case of accident.

Uncle Benny, leaning back deeply in the other armchair, had his pipe in his hand, and looked on with one trembling, distrustful eye. The other eye he kept closed in so flat and distorted a way, that the eyelid looked like a dried bean-pod. It caused his whole face to be wrinkled. The left cheek bulged up fearfully, the right corner of his mouth hung down sourly among the brown stubble of his unshaven face.

Uncle Joseph, a small fat man, with a corporation, a gold watch-chain that heaved on his stomach, and a pair of pale, limp hands laden with many heavy gold rings,—he, too, leaned back. The rims of his eyes were red and inflamed, and looked even redder and more inflamed than they were behind his shining gold-rimmed eyeglasses. Uncle Joseph's eyes flickered slowly, flickered like the eyes of a man who knows perfectly well that his eyes are safe, but to make assurance doubly sure, and also under the influence of so many eyes flickering all around him, keeps his flicker-muscles ready to shut down the blinds in case of emergency.

Sam, the cause of ■ the flickerings, tried to control his own flickerings. The scissors in his hand wriggled their way carefully between the iron wires. He was afraid of letting the bottle slip. He struggled obstinately with an unsteady hand, working from left to right, very tamely, without actually loosening the structure of iron, cork and glass. Whenever the scissors made a scraping sound on touching the wire, he jumped back, and his eyes flickered, though he exercised much self-control. And because it was terribly hot, and possibly also because of the exertion, his colourless face, with his little black moustache perspired, and beads of sweat stood on his forehead in the soft yellow light of the lamp.

Silence and flickering.

Then Sam, with his eyelids trembling like nervous butterfly-wings, said :

" . . . It's a good job I don't have to do this every day . . . "

" That's right," said Uncle Joseph, putting his shaky eyeglasses straight."

" For Heaven's sake, shut up ! " Aunt Rebecca called out with fear in her voice. It was no joke. It might burst, and then somebody would be hurt.

" Nonsense," said Uncle Benny, opening his other eye for a moment, now that Sam was not working with his scissors :  
" There'll only be a pop."

" Only a pop, indeed," Sarah whined, pushing back her fringe—being hot with laughing—" there'll be more than a pop, I know. These things burst with a bang."

" Keep your head out of the way," Aunt Dora cautioned.  
" You, Sam, keep your head out of the way ! A cork like that comes out with a lot of force."

" No ! " Uncle Benny exclaimed in a tone of annoyance.  
" There'll be nothing more than a pop, I tell you ! I know all about these things. Want to teach your grandmother to suck eggs ! A round stopper bottle—that's all it is ! "

" Listen to him ! Only a pop, he says," Aunt Rebecca moaned.  
" As if a pop from a cork——"

" Shut up ! " Aunt Dora exclaimed, ducking her head suddenly. Sam's scissors had just touched the wires.

And all the eyelids flickered again, as before, flickered fearfully, flickered anxiously.

Beside the lamp the bottle bulged quietly—a bottle of champagne.

Uncle Joseph had won it. There had been a charity-bazaar, with lots of needlework, antimacassars, shawls, bottles of scent, boxes of soap, purses, books in artistic binding (jewels of gilt and red plush bindings !), boxes of cigars, kosher cake, tickets to have your photographs taken, tickets for a complete suit of clothes, perambulators, dolls, watches (nickel and silver ones), and a vast quantity of wine given by a charitable wine-dealer who had a lot of stuff left over. Uncle Joseph who—it was evident in his heavy gold watch-chain, his gold rings, his gold-rimmed eyeglasses—had been a lucky bird all his life, had drawn a bottle of champagne with his twenty-five cent ticket. For six months the bottle had lain in the cupboard, on the bottom shelf, near the box of butter-cake and the ginger bolas, and now that Aunt Rebecca, his

wife, had her birthday, and they were having a party to celebrate it, they were opening the bottle.

They had put out ordinary drinking tumblers, for such a family had no wine glasses.

The whole family was agog. And then they had stumbled on the difficulty of removing the cork, which was so malignantly fixed with iron and string, without doing injury to the furniture or themselves. That was why they flickered their eyelids. They had heard of bottles which had burst—and fragments that flew into people's eyes—of corks that hit one in the face like bullets, froth that spouted up to the ceiling . . . One must know how to do these things. One must give them undivided attention. And Sam—who had been the first to ejaculate that he knew ■ about the way these things were done floundered about so inexpertly with Aunt Rebecca's blunt scissors, which were used for all sorts of things : for cutting out shirts, for removing the fins from flounders, for trimming the wick of the lamp, for prising open Uncle Joseph's cigar boxes, for tacking down the floor-cloth, etc., etc., that they simply could not keep their eyes from flickering.

"If you hold it like that you'll cut your fingers," Uncle Benny warned Sam, watching him through the half-opened eye.

"You let me do it my way!" exclaimed Sam peevishly.

"Trust you to do it," Aunt Dora grumbled sourly. "I'm sure you'll spoil my carpet."

"Cut the string first," cried Sarah, with laughter in her voice.

"It is fastened with the string, not with the wire."

"It is fastened with the wire," Sam argued. Then suddenly, as he jerked the bottle impatiently, one of the wires snapped. It snapped. And the sound of it snapping was like the crackling of a flash of lightning in the ears of Sarah, Benny, Joseph, Rebecca and Dora. Their eyelids flickered—now it would come—pop—a great loud pop.

Sam, suddenly grown brave as a lion, exultant because the wire had snapped, fixed the bottle grimly between his knees, and with the force of a blacksmith he drove the scissors into the second joint. There was another snap. One of the points of the scissors had snapped off.

"Bang!" said Uncle Benny.

"Now I ask you," said Aunt Rebecca, "why do they fasten a

simple cork like a brick wall? Is it necessary? They do it just to give a lot of trouble."

"And if they didn't," said Uncle Joseph, wiping his gold eye-glasses, now that Sam had stopped for a while, "do you know how those bubbles work? They work like the waterworks . . . Would you stop the waterworks with a wad of paper?"

Sam started wriggling the broken scissors against the bottle again. But Aunt Rebecca was furious now:

"Stop it!" she cried. "You mustn't use force if you don't know how to handle the thing!"

"And who has told you that I don't know how to handle it!" Sam flared up. "We're not going to put it back in the cupboard unopened!"

"Let me try," said Uncle Benny.

"You keep your hands off it!" Aunt Dora shrieked, "Don't you touch it!"

"What a lot of fuss," Uncle Benny said ironically, "do you think many people would drink champagne if it needed a miracle to open the bottle! Nonsense! You mustn't tug at it—you must cut the wires."

"Hush!" cried Sarah warningly.

The scissors had at last loosened a second wire. The neck of the bottle pointed threateningly towards the lamp.

"Mind the lamp!"

"Turn the head to the window!"

"Put it out of the window when it bursts!"

"Keep your eyes out of the way, Sam!"

The voices got jumbled, and the twelve eyelids flickered wildly now at each movement of the bottle, as if there were some mysterious person beating time. Aunt Rebecca had taken refuge in the farthest corner of the room, near the cupboard. Aunt Dora had hidden behind the curtain, at the window. Sarah giggled at the terrible disturbance. Only the men remained in their chairs, but their eyes flickered at the slightest movement of the bottle.

"Go out in the passage with it, please," implored Aunt Rebecca, "It bursts with a bang and it spurts ever so high."

"Keep quiet!" Sam called out.

He cut the strings neatly, and trembling and flickering he looked at the cork.

"Now you'll hear it pop," said Uncle Benny anxiously.

"Joseph, get away from that bottle," Aunt Rebecca shrieked. "Benny, move back a bit—Do you want to get a piece of glass in your eye; d'you want to be crippled by it?"

"Hush!"

"Put it out of the window! Put it out of the window!" . . .

Sam rubbed his thumbs softly along the cork.

And quite tamely, like a snail taking alarm, the cork rose into the world out of the liquid.

Aunt Rebecca kept her fingertips in her hairy ears—Aunt Dora put her hands over the lobes of her ears, and kept her eyes tightly closed—Sarah put her head out of the window, to be on the safe side.

And comically quiet, like a little puff of breath out of a calm pouting of the lips, the cork slid from the bottle, without a sound, without a stir.

Not a sign of even a timid speck of froth rose from the neck of the bottle.

"Thank Heaven—no pop!" said Uncle Benny.

The flat liquid gurgled into the water tumblers.

## ROSH HASHANAH

By ISRAEL QUERIDO

*Translated by A. VAN SON*

Israel Querido, born in Amsterdam, October 1872, died August, 1932. Regarded as the greatest figure in modern Dutch literature. Entirely self-educated. Was first a watchmaker's apprentice, and later a diamond cutter. Chief novels: "Levensgang" (The Way of the World), describing the life of the diamond-cutters; "Menschenwee," translated into English as "Toil of Men"; "De Jordaan" (an epic, consisting of several parts, and describing life in that part of Amsterdam, known as "de Jordaan"); "Koningen" (Kings), a two-volume novel, dealing with the time of Xerxes. Dramas: "Aaron Laguna," "Saul and David." He also wrote hundreds of essays on literature, philosophy, music and painting.

WITH a solemn expression on his face Joshua walked across the cobbles of the broad courtyard with its deathly quiet, low, tiny little houses, which seemed to be bowed beneath the weight of the wrought iron street-lamps. He crept on tiptoe into the Portuguese synagogue, where the solemn evening service for the New Year had not yet begun.

Absurd . . . as if he could be late !

The dim light of the candles flickered hazily round his pale face. Joshua quickly kissed the doorpost. Then, overwhelmed with happiness, he walked to his seat right in the front, near the semi-dark space of the Hechal, where the Dayan was sitting for the time being on a separate cross-bench, against the dimly-lit dark wall. The gold leather panelling glittered softly like the scales of carp.

Feeling very happy, Joshua greeted various acquaintances, murmuring softly his good wishes: "May you be inscribed for a happy year."

Respectfully Joshua approached Rabbi Gazarida d'Azevedo, and shook hands with him. The white sand on the wooden floor crunched under his soft tread.

The golden candlelight trembled on d'Azevedo's face, which

now and then became visible under his cocked hat. At one time ■ had been the rule for the Rabbi to sit on the bench in the shady corner, near the mysteriously dark Hechal. Now the Rabbi sat there only for a while, for his place was with the foreign Rabbi, near the Theba. Joshua felt exalted, though he was conscious of the same oppressive heaviness of heart that fell upon him whenever he entered the House of God.

Almost inaudibly Joshua muttered the Sabbath-prayer, his hollow, wrinkled face turned up to the yellow hanging chandeliers :

"In the abundance of thy loving-kindness will I come into thy house ; I will worship towards thy holy temple in the fear of thee. O God, answer me in the truth of thy salvation."

The beseeching Hamaäloth of King David sang, within him, like one wave of sound, rich and heavy.

It was the Eve of Rosh Hashanah—devotion, solemnity, High Festival in the great synagogue : the Day of Judgment. A pious stillness rustled beneath the four monumental columns of elephant-grey, with the small candle-brackets emitting a fitful light on the gigantic pedestals. Worshippers as they entered cast their menacing shadows behind them, which grew horribly till they came up to the windows, and vanished between the green curtains into the night.

With awe-inspiring joy, Joshua heard all round him :

Shemang Yisrael, Adonay Eloheanu, Adonay Echad . . .

The choir chanted psalms solemnly. The Ten Commandments, in glittering gold letters against the centre door of the Hechal, began to vibrate, to live. Joshua Hereira joined in the singing with ecstasy, the song upon Gittith, a Psalm of Asaph. He quivered as the Hebrew words rang out : Sing aloud unto God our strength ; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow upon the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feastday.

So the congregation poured out their feeling in the Evening Service for Rosh Hashanah. Repeatedly these words were heard :

The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice ; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea. . . .

And when the choir had finished singing these words, that

lifted up the congregation a deep silence fell. And then, like a breeze a new verse arose.

Joshua was deeply moved by the psalm upon Gittith, the Song of Asaph. Beatitude, awe, consolation, and imploring for forgiveness reverberated in his pious soul . . . Joshua shivered and listened to the buzz of voices, dying away.

Rosh Hashanah, the day of the Sounding of the Shophar . . . It was engraved in Joshua's soul : the New Year, the great day of holiness when the Lord God of Israel causes all the creatures of the Universe to stand before him in judgment . . . Hereira felt that he was growing smaller, more insignificant in this vast synagogue, with its subdued golden glimmer, its ghostly white walls and dark shadowy corners. Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, was to Joshua a sacred day. It meant to him the Day of Memorial and Penitence, even though he obtained forgiveness for his sins, and was granted remission for all his transgressions.

From Mizmor Shir Luyom Hashabbath to the final supplication all that he had done throughout the year, Joshua dug up out of the depths of his being, calling everything up before his mind.

On the first of Tishri, the Day of Judgment, Joshua knew that he must be even more outspoken than on other days before the Almighty, before the Father and King. He must hide none of his wicked thoughts and sinful desires from the Lord of the Universe, no matter how it might hurt him to recall them. Penitence, Prayer and Charity avert the severe decree. Prayer and Penitence . . .

With throbbing heart Joshua questioned himself sternly. Was he acting wrongly towards his son, Sem ? He was a bully and a scoffer and there was cruelty looking out of his dark eyes. But he must forgive the boy, though he snarled at him from morning till night. For the Lord of the Universe, a God full of Compassion, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, He alone must deal with Sem's rebelliousness. And the Lord had commanded it to be made known at Rosh Hashanah that all human wickedness would vanish out of all creatures of the earth, Heathens, Christians, and Jews, like a rising smoke. He might also speak more mildly to Moses, with his lashing scorn and fits of jealous passion. It was true that Moses poured out a flood of abuse and sinful vituperation against Snoga and Parnassim, and raged about the smelly garret in which

■ had to sleep. But he (Joshua) himself, had probably been even more wayward and unmanageable than his twins Moses and Jack.

As for Jack, the boxer, well . . . he was a finer character than he himself, though the boy, once he got started, did go on boasting about the athletic prowess of his friends. The entire neighbourhood considered Jack a good boy. Why should he not love his own son? Woe to him who would be wise in his own eyes!

Abe had remained a good boy, always full of remorse on account of his powerless hesitations. He at least would sit at Joshua's table to-night, thank God. Abe was a good lad, and Joshua felt that he had taken him to task far too severely and hastily because of his inner weaknesses and vacillations, when he went about depressed, regretting that he had allowed himself to be instigated by his quarrelsome brothers to do things for which he was afterwards sorry.

Joshua wondered, too, whether he had been considerate and charitable to his brother Sol, and his brother Ike, who hadn't a penny to bless themselves with. And towards his needy sisters Truddie and Esther of Moddermolensteeg? He had to confess everything to the Creator of the World, everything, even the merest trifles. For God could see into the depths of all human deeds and thoughts. He decided that he would keep the third day of Tishri, the fast-day of Gedalyah, more scrupulously than ever!

Had he not retained for himself too great a share of his own earnings—what he had scraped together very laboriously by his market-trading?

Trembling before God, Joshua hearkened to the voice of his uneasy conscience. Tzedakah . . . both justice and charity . . . twin words with one soul!

Rebecca, ah, she was always his guardian angel all the year round . . . God bless her, and keep her well for a hundred years . . . he could never have done that dear child any wrong, no matter how angry and hasty he might have been. That was the truth! He would like to spoil that girl, Shemah beni, she was indeed an angel. She would keep a dainty for him with as much care as his Tephillin. And did she ever complain about her annoying brothers? . . .

But Hush! He must not complain to-day. Everything

within him became penitence. He must pray and expiate his faults by prayer . . . He remembered Rabbi Gazarida d'Azevedo in his prayers, and also Rabbi Herschel, the noble friend of the poor, whose sermons in the New Synagogue, every fortnight, breathed so humane a spirit. He diligently taught his congregation the religious duties, gave them fresh courage, and uplifted them, as if they were all one. He was a noble man, whose words and example set him free from his own fears and tortures. He was not one of those Rabbis who only preach piety to others, lay down the law, and fill themselves with rich food. How clearly Rabbi Herschel had explained to him the most intricate Rabbinical commentaries and super-commentaries from Mishnah and Gemarah, and elucidated to him, blockhead that he was, the deeper sense of many beautiful prayers and hymns and scriptural stories.

Almighty Father ! . . . Joshua pulled himself up with a start. The service had begun. Had he been sleeping ? Had he been dreaming ? Was it not written : He who dreams on New Year's day, will dream away his happiness ?

Each word distinct, the rich voice of the first Chazan, the Reader Rocamoza Lopez, resounded through the high, semi-dark space. He heard the voices of the praying congregation : Behold, I am before thee like a vessel filled with shame and confusion. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ? Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.

Joshua sobbed in silence, and stared deaf and blind into the dim candle-light. His thoughts began to wander again and he mused. The Ashkenazic congregation were praying now in their grave clothes, in white shrouds. For the Judgment of the Lord demanded preparation for destruction and obliteration. That was far more impressive and pious, thought Joshua Hereira. Why did the Portuguese Jews not do the same ? Why sit here in your best suit . . . and without a talith and sargenes ? . . . On Rosh Hashanah death hovered in the House of Prayer . . .

With a start Joshua woke from his reverie. He must not go on thinking of all the insignificant experiences of himself and others. For had he not sinned towards God ? When the services at the Protestant Zuyderkerk opposite his house had been stopped he had missed the beautiful sound of the organ playing, to which he had always loved to listen on Sundays. Was this not a

sin, to regret not hearing the Christian organ playing any more ?

From the very depths of his heavy-hearted joy for the Festival of New Year, the day on which the world was called into being, Joshua felt a dark groaning accusation rise up against himself. He had not acknowledged the Lord of Justice in everything, had not faithfully enquired of God. He had sinned against God a thousandfold, sins which could never be forgiven him.

He wept, Joshua Hereira wept full of fear and abashed, while his lips joined in the muttered prayer of the congregation, above which rose the rich voice of Chazan Rocamoza, standing on the Theba.

Praise God in His sanctuary ; Praise Him in the firmament of His power . . . Praise Him with the blast of the horn, with stringed instruments and the pipe ; praise Him with the clear toned cymbals, and with the loud-sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord ! . . .

Joshua dared hardly look up at the high, semi-dark windows of the synagogue, behind which the tops of the old trees were swaying mysteriously. He dared not look at the heads of the people, upon which the reflection of the candlelight danced, nor at the slowly-moving chandeliers over the dark choir, where the psalm-singing of the boys was heard re-echoing from a misty depth. For to Joshua the chandeliers looked black ; all the fantastically dancing flames of the candles seemed to him to be quaking mournfully. The only God, the Supreme Judge, Joshua had not faithfully served Him. Not always and not in everything had he felt His breath. He had kept the secret of his dreams and his visions of happiness, which he had cherished at his window in Zandd-warsstraat, concealed even from the Lord . . . He wondered if God would see him in the profound darkness of his repentance, him, a mere nothing. Would the Lord be so merciful as to throw his sins into the dark depths of the ocean ?

From the first day of Elul the Shophar had sounded in the House of God, twice every day . . . And yet, if only the Shophar might be delayed in sounding the day after to-morrow, the second day of Tishri ! If he might but escape the three blasts of the Shebarim ! For Joshua felt that he would drop dead on the spot with fear and dismay. The trump of the New Year, the Tekiah, resounded like a wild wail through the Synagogue, like a human moan, a penitential prayer, breaking off suddenly with a heart rending sob.

Before he heard that piercing sound of the Shophar he must first beseech God, with sincere remorse, to forgive his sins against Him and his sins against men. He must also pray that the Almighty might grant mercy and remission of sins to his erring sons, who denied the existence of God, who did not realise how in distress and agony they would shudder terribly on the great day of the Lord, on the Day of Judgment, when the great Shophar would resound. The Almighty reigns for ever and ever, over the sun and all the earth.

Joshua longed for the reading of the Law the day after to-morrow, for the sweet and holy story of Abraham's offering, which is always read on the second day of Rosh Hashanah . . . Suppose the Lord would prove him too . . . would he offer his Rebecca, if the Lord desired it, as Abraham was ready to offer his Isaac, whom he loved ? . . .

Joshua shivered with terror. Yet he must go on praying for mercy, for compassion on this day, the Youm Hadin. For to be honest with himself, had he really been good, patient, helpful to all who surrounded him ? Had he been equally good in his thoughts to all his fellow-men, to Christians as much as to Jews ?

Ah, he would not sit on seven carpets, like the great Rabbi Yochanan. Nor was it sentimentality, nor nonsense, nor a desire to curry favour with the Supreme Being, any more than it was merely wanting to be " inscribed for a happy year," as they always wished each other on Rosh Hashanah. For he called, indeed, upon the name of the Lord out of trouble and sorrow ! . . .

What was it that burned, that rankled in his mind so fearfully and secretly, hot with pain as if he had been stung to the depths of his uneasy heart ? Joshua wanted to evade the question, tried to deceive himself about it. But the Lord laid it bare . . .

It was the unconquered aversion that he felt for his brother-in-law, Rozenheim, and his abhorrence for all his near relations, which he was utterly unable to conquer.

Joshua stammered in submission : Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, and God of our fathers. . . .

His rancour against Henry Rozenheim was still alive, clammy breathing in the depth and concealment of his soul. The Lord had discovered it . . .

It is written : Thou shalt not avenge, not bear any grudge against the children of thy people. The Torah commanded it !

Why had he taken an oath to break with Rozenheim completely ?

Joshua heard the voice of a dying man saying the death-bed confession and the voices of those who joined in the saying of Shemot. . . .

He trembled at his own confession of his sins . . . and pleaded :

—O Lord, lighten my darkness.

## A SON OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

By M. H. VAN CAMPEN

Translated by A. VAN SON

Michel H. van Campen, born in Amsterdam, in 1874. Self-educated. At first worked as a diamond-cutter. An important novelist and essayist.

Principal works: "Bikoerim" (short stories and sketches); "Opstellen betreffende Literatuur" (essays on literature).

IN the quiet room, at that late hour of the night, the light seemed alive and nodding to the things in the room, that rose higher under its influence, above the head of the old man, who sat there motionless. The room was a picture of a time-dream which had become a reality, so engrossing that the reality of time had died away here, and one could not believe that outside was the intense life of the town. Concealed within these screening walls, the past had put out its still-living hand through the distance of the ages, and had driven the unreality of the present out of the essence of things. Hazily, partly merged with the shadows of the night, the dream rose in the far end of the room where, escaping the strong light, the green silk veil of the Holy Ark was vaguely visible behind the almemmor. In the tall bookcases the leather backs of the folio volumes were struck by the golden shimmer of the lamp. To the old man who was reading with devout love in a book whose leaves were yellow with age, the dream had become real life. The unbroken stillness, which seemed to shut out all idea of the finite, conferred upon this life an aspect of immortality.

Suddenly a noise broke through the walls of the room. The old man listened; what visitor could be coming so late? He put his hands on the arms of his chair and turned to the door. There was surprise in his dignified face. The eyebrows contracted over the dark eyes, displeased because of the intrusion he feared. A weary footstep was heard on the stairs . . . a stream of street noises came in, filling the room as if with a wind. Soon it was quiet again. There was some whispering, almost inaudible, out in the passage. Then the door opened and a man with a red perspiring

face entered. His eyes were big and questioning. And he carried a travelling bag and an umbrella, which he brought into the room with him.

"You!" cried the old man staring at his visitor in amazement.

"Yes . . . uncle." He dropped wearily into a chair, and let his travelling-bag and umbrella slip down on the thick carpet, where the thud was hardly heard. The silence grew oppressive. Only the flame of the lamp seemed alive . . .

The old dry wood of a cupboard creaked.

"Has anything happened——?" the old man asked fearfully.

"Hannah . . . the children?"

"They are all well." He sat looking down at his clasped hands, pressing himself tight against the back of the chair, as if seeking to make himself small, very small.

"But something is the matter . . . something is wrong with you——"

The man bowed his head lower still, pressed his hands against his eyes and whispered; "My business has crashed."

The old man's face became ashen. His open mouth grew stiff; every trace of life seemed to have vanished. Suddenly, he ejaculated with great difficulty, the word: "Crashed——"

"Yes . . . please . . . don't question me . . . I wish I were dead!" Despair seemed to flash before his eyes in the darkness of his hands. The old man went up to him and tried to calm him. "Don't say that," he cried. "It is a sin. . . . And here. . . . Calm yourself; you see I am calm. . . . And when you are calm, too, you will tell me all about it. Take your time——"

Then he sat down again with his book that was yellowed with age . . . His thoughts overwhelmed him: A bankrupt . . . a bankrupt . . . My God! how can it be possible . . . Everything had been going so well since he had started in business. How could it have changed so suddenly . . . Perhaps he was exaggerating . . . He had brought him up to expect things to go too smoothly. The lad was easily depressed . . . Things might still be arranged . . . But if it were really true . . . half his fortune was involved in the business . . . away from his home, his dear old home . . . what was to become of him . . . Back to the life from which he had become estranged . . . ? My God, I weep unto thee, do not let it be so, do not let it be so . . . he has not yet spoken . . . let me not hear the dread words. . . . Egotist,

self-seeker ! Fifty years of sacred study, of controlling the passions, of self-chastisement, this is the fruit. . . .

I ought to be ashamed of myself, old fool that I am, his thoughts ran on. What of his young life, his wife and his children . . . I pray for him, O Lord, I pray for him . . . Can nothing be done to change this ? . . . What a fool he was, to think that the course of events would be changed for him . . . Yet why not . . . God can work a miracle and cover it with the appearance of what is logically essential and natural . . . Is it not written : He who prays for another, shall be helped first . . . Egotist, miserable egotist . . . Oh, his thoughts were become confused . . . he was a sinner . . . he would think no more . . . Let God do what is right in His own eyes . . . He would be still now . . . wait . . . without thinking . . . as in a trance. . . .

It was as if the dream-life in the room had not been disturbed by real life at all, as if no harsh word had impinged upon the silence. The two men were now seated motionless. . . .

At last the old man moved, looked up . . . How much time had elapsed since he had thus been waiting, without a wish to think, hope, pray, and had been thinking, hoping, praying all the same ? Facing him, against the dark wall-paper, sat a figure of despair, huddled together, a heap of blackness from which the white surfaces of the hands rose up, concealing the face.

He saw how utter grief had gripped him, and how he was burnt up with the desire to live no more. And he dared not speak, fearing that he would hear all this terror ; he dared not look into the face, lest perhaps he would find it only a mask of pain.

But he must ! He could perhaps still help, or at least comfort him . . . He could not leave him to his despair. . . .

How could he possibly have thought of himself now . . . Was the lad not as his own child . . . his dead sister's son . . . He had always been good to him, had given him his love, which no childless man may expect . . . A son could not have been more to him . . .

He had lost his parents very young . . . He must have felt the loss, especially of his mother. And how much more now . . . Yet it was better that she could not see him now . . . When he looked like that . . . He must be his father now and always, as long as God granted him life . . . and his mother too . . . How should he begin—what should he say—?

"My child, my dear boy, speak to me . . . No matter what is in your mind . . . tell me all . . . are we not one——? It grieves me to think that you may doubt my entire sympathy with you . . . Are you afraid that I shall be severe . . . My child, I am an old man . . . I know . . . I know——"

A tremor passed through the dark figure, but no answer came.

"My boy, will you enter the night like this, the long night, alone with your sorrow . . . Are you ashamed to look ■ me? That is foolish . . . Am I better than you are . . .? Have I not sinned in a life of seventy . . . seventy years?"

"No, no!" The words came passionately now, and he tore his hands wildly away from his face. "Don't humble yourself to come down to my level . . . I am a wretch, a rogue . . . Oh, you don't know. . . I had no right to take to speculation . . . I had to raise the money . . . I was sure the shares would go up . . . Why did I do it . . .? I refused to think of the consequences . . . I drove out all thought of consequences like a man who fuddles himself before he commits a murder . . . And now . . . now I do think . . . I do think. And I shall curse myself till I am dead . . . O God, God, I wish I were dead . . . rid of everything."

But the old man spoke to him in the exalted language of one who each day from morning till night, and often from night till morning, studies the Bible and the Talmud: "My poor child, you are speaking hard words again . . . but God will not listen to what you are saying now in the bitterness of your soul . . . Like a red cloud your sin surrounds you now, and you do not see the whiteness of the years you spent in purity, and you think you are a sinner beyond hope of redemption. But I will tell you who you are, and I will show you now what you have done before this happened.

"When you were growing from a youth into a man, I thought—what will he do with his life if I always lead him, without giving him a chance to act for himself . . .? I let him think that I never take my eyes off him. He must have more freedom. Spend money in his own way. I shall pretend to see nothing, but I shall watch carefully to see what road he will take . . . When I saw that you did not change, that you developed human virtues . . . how glad I was, my boy. How much joy you gave me . . . I saw you grow up. Falsehood and wickedness were powerless against you. What would my old age have been without you? . . . empty . . . aimless. You have been as my

own child . . . You have always respected me like a father, rewarded me a thousandfold for what I have done for you, what it was my duty to do, else I should have been an unnatural monster . . . Think of this . . . Do not say that I am only trying to console you. I swear that I am telling you the truth . . . I have seen you in your youth live as other people do in their old age . . . you fought against your weaknesses like a man—such men do not sink for ever. You have the strength to rise again . . . Don't turn from life . . . life is the friend of those who know how to bear with it . . . It may yet be fair and bright for you . . . you are only at the beginning of your life. Believe me : a great mercy pervades life, no matter how it may seem . . . there are invisible hands which save, support. . . .

"I know people with a nature like yours think when they have joy that it will be fleeting and, when they suffer grief that it is eternal ; they bury themselves in the night and drink their tears and feed on their sorrow until it becomes a quiet happiness . . . But nothing remains as it is—everything changes, improves, if only one gives it time, and one has patience——"

"Uncle, you are not a man . . . like me . . . Your words pass me by. I don't feel them . . . When I look into myself I see nothing of all those beautiful things of which you speak . . . Have I resisted temptation . . . ? This was the time when I might have done so . . . But I failed . . . I am a criminal now, a common criminal and you, the saint, cannot understand this . . . That is natural . . . Oh, when I remember . . . how we used to sit here together . . . Why is it all so strange to me now ? . . . A man ought to have no memory."

"Have no memory ! One day remembrance will be your one consolation. You will think back to this night and you will say to yourself : my uncle was a severe man with strict ideas about life, and yet he did not cast me out, but he comforted me, and gave me back my trust in myself. I could not have been so bad then as I believed . . . Do you really think that I am so much better than you are, a saint, as you say, unable to understand what you feel ? A few minutes ago, when you told me what has happened, the saint thought first of himself . . . ! No ! Believe me, I am only human, your equal, nothing, nothing more. Come, let us see . . . Can we not do something . . . ? I cannot believe there is no way out——"

"Uncle, please don't torment me again. I have spent all day and night calculating, till my head swam, and everything danced in front of my eyes. Last night, at my office, I tried to induce myself to believe that I was mad . . . Any man doing a thing like that must be mad . . . I got so excited at the idea that my mind actually began to reel, and I felt happy for a while at the whirl of my distracted thoughts . . . Then it occurred to me that a man who knows that he is mad, and is glad about it, cannot really be mad, and out of that one logical thought others grew, till everything again stood before me in grim clarity . . .

"No, nothing can be done . . . The liabilities amount to hundreds of thousands of guilders . . . But it is all my own affair. . . . You must not be dragged into it . . . into all these mean things. . . .

"I am not yet a bankrupt . . . not till to-morrow . . . not till to-morrow . . . And I have saved you . . . !"

"Saved me?"

"Don't question me, uncle! For God's sake stop questioning me! I have brought your money with me . . . I thought it would be better so. . . . here ■ is——"

He hastily snatched a packet out of the inside pocket of his coat, stood up, placed it down on the table, walked back again to his seat, as if staggering under heavy-weighted thoughts, and fell back again into his chair, trying not to see his uncle, and afraid of what he was going to say now.

The old man stared aghast at the paper packet, which gleamed insolently under the lamp, and seemed to disturb the hazy dream-life of the room.

"That is money . . . money . . .," he said stammering, "money stolen from the other creditors."

"Don't say that, uncle! You don't know that . . . You need not know that . . . I shall not be bankrupt before to-morrow . . . You know nothing about it . . . I'm doing it——"

"Silence, Jacob! Don't try to tempt me . . . that money . . . take it away . . . at once . . . take it away!"

"Please listen to me, uncle, If you don't take the money I shall leave your house a desperate man. For I shall be tormented by the knowledge that I have ruined you, my benefactor; that because of me, you will have to live in poverty . . . I shall not be able to go on living. Don't make things worse for me. I can't

bear the thought that for all your kindness to me I have made you a pauper. I can't bear it . . . Think of that . . . I am not threatening. ■ is the bare truth."

"You do not realise what you are saying, my boy . . . If I were to take that money, it would not be you who would have done me the kindness. It would be those other people to whom I would owe everything, and they would not even have done a good deed for they do not want to do it . . . on the contrary, they would curse me if they knew.

"And the only thing that you would achieve would be that we would both be criminals. You cannot give me anything—for it is no longer your money.—And you would have the knowledge that you were not alone in your crime, that you had made me your accomplice, that you had made me a criminal, now when I have almost come to the end of my days, that you had diverted the course of ■ long life, in which I have at least tried to be honest . . . Do you want to do that . . . ?"

"My God, uncle! My God! You drive me crazy! You are not human . . . a human being would not speak like that . . . You are pitiless! . . . Where shall I go now? . . . What can I do now? . . . Have you no pity for me? . . . You are wicked . . . wicked . . . to deprive me of my last hope . . . You are an egotist . . . an egotist, who wants to remain honest himself, though another fall into the deepest hell because of his honesty . . . ! Honest! Honest! What is the meaning of honesty . . . ! Everything is collapsing around me. What can I hold on to now in my distress . . . One man is good, and another is wicked. And both are egotists . . . You speak with such assurance, as if you have no doubts about anything . . . Do you really think that you know what is absolute good, seeing that you weigh everything, test it, and accept or reject it with such certitude . . . Do you imagine that you have *the* standard of truth and honesty? Don't torment me with your calm assurance, analysing everything I say so quietly, as if it were nothing concerning you——"

His body was suddenly convulsed with nervous sobs. It seemed to the old man as if the room shook with his despair. He looked towards the corner where the green silk veil of the Ark was almost invisible in the shadows. It was hopeless . . . if he sacrificed the rest of his fortune, it would not help . . . The boy was crying his heart out. . . It might do him good to cry . . . He

might be more calm afterwards . . . But how could he comfort him, what solace could he offer him when he had become calm ?

He realised the situation only too well : you cannot pay your creditors with philosophy . . . But—might not a new building rise on the ruins of the old ? . . . He must make him feel that life goes on, and if one lives it well, it rights itself . . . There ■ only one end to endeavour—death.

Now he was growing more calm . . . how grief makes a man older. Poor boy . . . Whatever he might have done, he was paying dearly for it . . . That terrible passion for speculating . .

Yet there might be some truth in what the boy had said . . . He wondered whether he had disciplined himself so completely by his strictly orthodox way of life, that there was no human sympathy left in him, and that all he did, was to ask himself constantly—Is this according to the Torah ?

It was true. And yet he was not devoid of human feeling. In fact, he was constantly becoming more human, for the Torah being the revelation of the Supreme Being, the Lord of Nature, in obeying the words of the Lord of Nature, he was being truly, perfectly human, free from inhumanity and unnaturalness . . .

Ah, now the boy was going to speak. He would be sorry for his outburst of passion . . . If only there was not that terrible thought in his mind . . . of suicide . . . that was the great danger. . . .

The young man rose from the shadowy, dark wall, and came into the luminous circle of the lamp. There was a calm firmness on his face. He extended his hand to his uncle, and said in a low voice :

“ Forgive me, please . . . I did not realise what I was saying . . . I am going now . . . believe me, I honour and respect you more than I shall ever be able to say . . . Don't be angry with me ; love me as you have always done . . . Would to God I were like you . . . but that is impossible now . . . it is all over . . . good-bye . . . I only wanted to say . . . no . . . I don't want to say anything more. . . . Why are you trembling like that ? . . . Dear, dear uncle, you have always been good to me, always . . . please don't be angry now . . . Yes . . . I will take the money with me . . . good-bye——”

He turned to the door, but the old man seized him by the arm, and said in a tone of command : “ No . . . I shall not let you go like that . . . come here ; let me see your face . . . Now

listen. I have something to say. I know what you are going to do. I can see the fear in your eyes . . . You would like to embrace me . . . for the last time ! But you are afraid that it would make me suspicious . . . You haven't the courage to face things. You want to run away from your difficulties. Remember, if you do this thing, your memory will be accursed; even your children will not mention your name ; they will be ashamed of the father who killed himself. I shall blot your memory out of my heart, and I shall say that your mother had no son. The room where you slept, the places where you sat, I shall shun them like the plague ; the sacred books which I taught you to read and understand, I shall not look at them again . . . I shall not touch them any more, because you have held them in your hand. Your name will be an abomination to me, and I shall not remember it in my prayers. You will be to me as if you had never existed. The world ■ full of weeping for the dead—who will bewail you . . . ? Like a still-born child that is not mourned by anyone, you will have passed away."

Trembling from head to foot, utterly beaten, the young man stood facing his uncle, who had spoken with the inspiration of a prophet, in the language of the Bible, which had surrounded him all the days of his life.

But the old man's face soon softened, and he continued in a voice full of tenderness : " I love you, my child. Take my advice and you will see how God will help you again. Put away your foolish pride. What is happening to you now has happened to others before. People will despise you ? Let them. Say to yourself : I will be strong, and bear all this patiently, till I have made good my mistake, as far as possible.

"Listen, I have an idea : When you have settled your affairs in Paris, come here to me, at once, with your wife and children, and start a new business here in Amsterdam, with the rest of my money. You will find it better here, in good old Amsterdam. You should never have left it . . . And we shall be together. And when my time comes, I shall have you at my side . . . I have often been afraid of dying alone, though ■ have never told you about it . . . Now everything will be right, won't it."

The young man breathed heavily, staring straight in front of him ; then he suddenly put both his hands on his uncle's head, and he kissed him on the forehead, passionately.

The old man released himself with a smile, and said contentedly: "That's right, my boy, now you are yourself again. Do you feel more at ease now?"

"At ease . . . at ease . . . Oh my God . . ." he groaned in an agony of compunction, and then: "But I thank you. I do thank you, I can never thank you enough for this . . . Oh! if only you knew——"

"But I do know . . . I know you better than you know yourself."

"You still believe in me . . . you are not doing this just for pity . . . you don't despise me?"

"No, my boy, if I despised a man at my age, because of an error, or even a crime, my life would have been wasted and it would be better that I should never have lived . . . But I suggest that if you have calmed down enough, and you want to go back to-night, you had better go now."

"Yes, uncle, I must go and face the music as soon as possible . . . Oh, it is terrible . . . all those people . . . those faces . . . I wish it were over."

"Courage, my boy, courage." They parted with a hand-shake. The old man took his nephew down to the front-door, then he returned to the room and sat down again at the table, under the glow of the lamp. And as the hours of the night passed he kept thinking—he had saved a human life. . . . He would have his nephew with him now always.

But it would be hard on them to have an old man in the house . . . He would try to give them as little trouble as possible . . . but—he was getting older, and it would not be pleasant to be a nuisance to people . . . But that could not be helped now. One generation goes and another generation comes . . . He only hoped that he might remain in possession of his faculties to the end . . . for to be a dotard . . . and dependent on others. . . .

The ticking of the clock broke the silence. Two o'clock in the morning. The old man passed his hand across his forehead, opened his book, and began again to read. The silence seemed to deepen, for the night had drowned all sound. But here the past was awake, with the appearance of eternity upon it. The light nodded to the objects in the room, which began to shine under its influence. And all round, against the walls, stood shadows, like sentinels, motionless and still.

## SEDER NIGHT

By CARRY VAN BRUGGEN

*Translated by A. VAN SON*

Mrs. Carry van Bruggen de Haan, born at Smilde (in the province of Drenthe), Holland, 1881; died 1932. Sister of the famous poet and Agudist, Dr. de Haan, who was killed in Palestine in 1924. Was trained for the teaching profession. Her first husband was the writer and journalist Kees van Bruggen, with whom she lived for several years in the Dutch East Indies. Her second husband was the art-historian, Dr. A. Pit.

Many of her novels and stories deal with Jewish life in the Dutch provinces.

Chief novels: "De Verlatene" (Lonely); "Het Joodje" (The Jew); "Het Huisje aan de Sloot" (The Little House by the Ditch).

THE old man, grey and bowed with age, shuffled about the room with its old-fashioned furniture. His voice trembled, and there was a tender look in his eyes, as he spoke in the direction of the cupboard bed:

"Sarah, are you asleep? . . . are you asleep? . . . Oh, you are awake! It's time for the Seder, Sarah . . . I am just going ■ light the lamp . . . And to set the table . . . My God, what terrible weather . . . wind and rain . . . not a star in the sky, and the trees are swishing like mad . . . You know, Sarah, I am afraid the weather is too bad for Elijah, the Prophet ■ come. We shall have to wait another year before we go to Eretz Israel. What is the matter, Sarah? You are not weeping on the Seder Night? Come, I'll light the lamp, and get everything ready. We shall celebrate the Passover together. There's somebody shouting 'Shop.' Who is there? I can't hear you . . . Speak a little louder . . . you want some buttons . . . ? I don't sell buttons to-night . . . I don't sell anything at all to night . . . Because it's a festival night . . . What festival is not your business . . . I want to be left alone . . . If I don't lock the front door that is my own affair . . . Shut the door behind you.

■ That was Jane Lammers, Sarah. She wanted to know why I

don't lock the door, if I don't want to sell anything. If I had told her that we must not lock the door to-night because the Messiah might come, they would have something else to laugh at us for.

"They would have something else to shout after me in the street. I wish they would leave me alone to-night. Please don't cry, Sarah. Look, I'll sit down here, so that you will be able to see and hear. So that you will be able to celebrate Seder Night as of old, and do your duty. You remember that Rabbi Gamaliel said : He who does not speak of these three things on Passover has not fulfilled his duty, namely : the Paschal lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs . . . You are not sleeping, are you ? You are awake, eh ? The doctor told me this morning . . . he said that I was not to celebrate the Seder with you, in this room . . . he said that you were too weak, that it would excite you too much . . . your heart is bad . . . but I could not do that, it is unthinkable . . . Seder Night without a Seder, without drinking wine, without breaking the unleavened bread . . . Should I have taken his advice ? Have I done wrong ? . . . Are you really too weak, Sarah ? No, of course not, a Jewish woman cannot be too ill to hear the Seder . . .

"Yes, I remember, this is the cloth which the children gave us on our silver wedding. The children have gone, and the cloth is still here . . . That's right, it's Yomtov now . . . Seven years that our Daniel has not been in his father's house. Are you crying again, now . . . Be quiet. The doctor said it is dangerous to excite yourself . . . I shan't say another word about the children.

"This is difficult to do, it wants a woman to do it. Last year you folded it for me, though you could no longer walk even then. You sat in the armchair, and I got everything ready ; but you folded the cloth . . . Yes, and here are the three cakes of unleavened bread, one on top of the other . . . Well, dear, how do you like it ? Have I done it properly ? I can live without them all, but I could not live without you . . . you must not leave me . . . you hear . . . never ! If you go away from me, I shall not stay here in this house. I shall go out into the streets, selling Habdalah candles, or Arba Kanfoth . . . No ! I would not do that ; there is no more demand for those things . . . I'll go from door to door selling picture postcards, soaps and combs. . . . And besides . . . those must give me bread to whom I

have given bread all my life, and I shall not be hungry till the end of my days.

"If only for his father's sake, my son Daniel ought not to have become a Socialist . . . For my sake he ought not to have got himself expelled from the Seminary, because he went to Socialist meetings every night . . . expelled . . . expelled . . . I could forget everything . . . but I shall never forget that . . . a grandson of Reb Jousef Lehren on his father's side, a great-grandson of Reb Akiba Rabbinoiwitsch on his mother's side . . . the grandson of a scholar . . . the great-grandson of a martyr . . . and expelled from the Seminary like a criminal . . . For hours he used to look at the pictures in his Hagadah . . . the Red Sea, the Ten Plagues . . . the wicked son, and the wise son, and the simple son, and the son who is unable to ask questions . . . Here is his Hagadah . . . here is his prayer book . . . Look at these words . . . Yeworechechoh adoushem weyishmerechoh . . . The Lord bless thee, and keep thee . . . the Lord bless thee. . .

"Shop . . . No, I won't go! I won't go! Let them call, let them ring the bell . . . I won't go! . . . What do you want? No, I won't sell anything now . . . no buttons . . . no boot-laces . . . no caps . . . no ribbons . . . I am celebrating my festival . . . You only come here to worry me . . . I can hear you laughing . . . Get out! . . . Oh, you are going, are you? Well, it's time you went . . . There, they've gone, Sarah. I shan't let them spoil my evening . . . they want to make me lock the door, but I must not lock it . . . You don't mean that, Sarah? You don't want me to lock the door? Never in my life, not till the end of my days will my door ever be locked on the night of exodus. And supposing . . . supposing one of them should come home, Sarah . . . one of our children . . . Are they to find their father's door locked? For them, too, I shall not lock my door till the end of my life. . . .

"Here are the bitter herbs and the Charoseth. I have put some wine in the Charoseth, Sarah, and some raisins, and apple, and sweet almonds, brown sugar and cinnamon . . . Haven't I done it well, Sarah? Last year you still did that. Do you remember how you once told Esther to mix the Charoseth? She made a fine mess of it . . . She never had her heart on Jewish things . . . Now her children are baptised . . . my daughter Esther . . . the great-granddaughter of Reb Akiba . . . she goes to church every Sunday

because she does not want people to know that she is a Jewess . . .

"Salt water. I mustn't upset it . . . Here is the egg . . . the lamb's bone . . . the Paschal lamb . . . What a terrible wind . . . and rain . . . the streets are flooded . . . and the trees are swishing . . . They are closing the baker's shop across the road . . . They are right, they will not get any more customers in this weather. So much the better. Now they will leave us alone . . . here is the horse-radish . . . They charged me a lot for that . . . I had to pay threepence for it . . . They have never charged you so much, Sarah.

"I think I've arranged it all now . . . I'll call it all out to you . . . You listen Sarah. No, don't sit up in bed . . . you must keep quiet, you know. Here is the bone, and there is the egg . . . Do you remember how little Rose could never understand that the egg has no end? Over and again I explained to her that the egg is the symbol of infinity. 'Here is the end,' she would say, indicating the point. She was stupid; you could make her believe anything. Heaven knows what that fellow made her believe, that scoundrel who took her away from us . . . he had a wife and children . . . Horse-radish . . . salt . . . sweet charoseth, and bitter herbs . . . 'These bitter herbs we eat because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our forefathers in Egypt' . . . It is *our* lives that have been embittered . . . Now I have still to get the wine ready. Would you like a glass, Sarah? A glass of wine from Palestine? It will do you good . . . you are not asleep, Sarah . . . you are not asleep? . . . I am talking to you . . . do you hear me? . . . I am not talking to myself . . . I don't talk to myself . . . I can't stand talking to myself . . . I must have someone to talk to . . . Have I awakened you, my dear? . . . Have I awakened you? . . . forgive me . . . I need some one to listen to me . . . I cannot bear to be alone . . . if I were alone, I should start talking to myself . . . and if I talked to myself I should go mad . . . Will you have a glass of wine, Sarah? Won't you try? All right, I'll drink alone then. . . .

"Now I must begin . . . That is quickly done . . . one chair and one book . . . a chair for myself, and my own old Hagadah . . . Wait, here's a chair for you, too. That's how we began. I used to sit here, and you there. So it was on the first Seder Night after our marriage. And then . . . Here's another chair for Joseph . . . Joseph was a darling . . . Joseph had a good heart

. . . he was a good boy . . . he should have stayed with me in the shop . . . then he at least would have been with us to-night. He had such a good heart. He ought never to have gone to Amsterdam . . . that spoiled him. The Jews there are not good . . . They go about on the Sabbath smoking cigars . . . that was his downfall. And yet . . . if Joseph had married a different wife . . . if he had married Becky Hartog, or Simchah Koperman . . . then Joseph would not have been estranged from us . . . Yes, do you know, Sarah, there might have been eight of us here to-night? He and his wife, and his children. How can I know whether his son has been circumcised? Perhaps Joseph does not even know that it is Seder Night now . . . Perhaps he is in a café somewhere . . . or in the theatre . . . Last Rosh Hashanah, Hirsch saw him with his wife in a restaurant . . . Joseph doesn't know that it is Seder Night, and that he has an old father and a sick mother . . .

"Here is another chair, a chair for Esther . . . Esther used to sit there, next to me. She never wanted to do her duty . . . She never knew what duty meant. She had no sense of honour . . . Do you know, Sarah, how I got to know that? I noticed it on Seder Night, when I cut the Morour and handed it round. You could tell their characters then. Joseph ate it to please you. Do you remember, dear, how we laughed at the faces he pulled . . . he hated it, but he ate it all the same to please us. Rose ate because she was afraid, she played with it, and she cried—it took her half an hour to swallow that little bit of bitterness . . . such a little bit of bitterness! . . . The lump she made us swallow is bigger and harder, and bitterer. . . .

"Now you are crying again, Sarah . . . Oh dear, I am causing you so much grief! But I can't help myself. To-night I miss them so, all of them . . . I miss even Esther, though she was never good to us . . . She was ashamed of us. She didn't know the meaning of duty. She could not understand what it means to be the granddaughter of a scholar, and the great-granddaughter of a martyr . . . She was beautiful. . . . She was a fine-looking girl. . . . She took the first Christian who asked her. She has gone away from us and disowned us. Yet I miss her. And I miss Rose, too. She was so stupid, and always afraid . . . God knows how afraid she is of that man . . . Heaven knows what a life he leads her! For her my door need not be open . . . She

will not come back . . . She will not dare to come back ! About Rose I understand everything . . . But my youngest son . . . there I understand nothing . . . he . . . my youngest son . . . my dearest son, who would have become a scholar, now that it is no longer necessary to be a martyr. He was brave, he was clever, and he was kind. There, a chair for Daniel . . . And here is the Hagadah of Reb Yitzik, from which he used to read Mah Nishtanah . . . The first year I told him to translate it, to see if he had understood it. And he said in his childish treble : ' Why is this night different from all other nights ? ' Till the end of my days, I shall not be able to understand why he caused me this shame.

" But I have talked too much about the things that are past . . . I am not going to torment myself any longer. I am going to celebrate the Seder. Are you listening, Sarah ? . . . Will you listen while I say Kiddush ? . . . You know, Sarah, we two alone are left. We began . . . two . . . then, we were three . . . then ' our . . . then five . . . then six . . . when Daniel went away we were five again . . . Rose left us, then we were four. . . then Esther, and there were three of us . . . and now that Joseph no longer comes, we are two again, dear, just as it was when we began. Only then we were young, and now we are old. And all the years that lie between, all the cares, all the trouble, it has all been for nothing ! Everything in vain, everything vanity . . . We have four children living, and not one of them comes home to celebrate the Seder Night. ' Youm hashishih——' There they go again ringing the bell . . . Off with you . . . wretches that you are . . . Who gives you the right to annoy me in my own house . . . I am alone . . . I am old, and my wife is dangerously ill . . . You are killing her . . . you will be the death of her . . . leave us alone . . . we are celebrating our festival, and we trouble nobody . . . Leave my shop ! What do you want here ? What is that noise ? . . . Thieves . . . thieves . . . you are stealing my stock . . . All right . . . take it . . . But please go home, go home quietly . . . Next week I shall sell my goods again . . . it's such bad weather, it's raining and blowing . . . and it's late . . . go to bed . . . go to sleep . . . leave me in peace.

" Great God, they are laughing at me . . . Give me back my children, you dogs ! You have taken them from me ! Yes, you have taken them away from me, you have tormented them and

humiliated them, till they were ashamed of being Jews . . . It ■  
you that have made me old before my time . . . you have made  
my wife ill . . . Don't laugh . . . don't laugh . . . get out of  
my house . . . I want to be master here . . . I want to celebrate  
the Seder night . . . Be off, away with you . . . I'll take my stick  
and hit you on the head. . . .

" Thank heaven, they have gone at last ! Now quickly, back to  
the Seder Table . . . 'Youn hashishih——' . . . God in  
Heaven, Sarah . . . Sarah . . . aren't you listening ? . . . For  
God's sake, Sarah, speak a word to me, only one word ! Look at  
me, Sarah ! . . .

" Now I am quite alone . . . quite alone . . . "

## A ROMANTIC BOY

By SAMUEL GOUDSMIT

*Translated by A. VAN SON*

Samuel Goudsmit, born in 1884 at Kampen, in the province of Overijssel, Holland. Novelist and short-story writer.

Principal books : "Zoekenden" (Searching for Truth); "Van Zwart en Blonden" (Dark and Fair People); "Jankef's Jongste" (Jacob's youngest son); "In de Groote Leerschool" (In the School of Life); "Jankef's Oude Sleutel" (Jacob's Old Key).

THIS is what happened to Abe Velleman, the son of Levi Velleman, nicknamed the Waiter, because whenever there was a wedding or a celebration, he played the waiter, with his best clothes on, of course, and after an extra wash.

For many years Levi Velleman had traded in all sorts of things in the village in which he was born. Abe was his eldest son, his help in the business. The boy was romantic; that is to say, he hankered for something unusual to happen to him; and for the rest, (perhaps because of this) he was fond of eating sweets, a rebel outwardly; tender, true and a dreamer inwardly.

They all loved each other very much; Abe on the one side, and his father and mother and his younger brothers and sisters on the other. But they rarely had an opportunity to say so to each other; for Abe was inclined to keep his thoughts to himself. Nor was that all—at the age of fourteen or fifteen he actually developed a habit of pretending the opposite of affection, especially towards his father and mother.

And so it came about that one day something unusual did happen. It is true that he was very sorry afterwards, and also because of what he did that day he had to be his mother's breadwinner for the rest of her life. But he acted that day with consummate skill.

It happened one hot summer's afternoon, during the holidays; many of the inhabitants of the village were away, and there was not much trade, and very little chance of earning anything. On a

day like that everybody was alert, turning over in his mind every possible likelihood of laying his hands on a few guilders. And Levi Velleman, looking into his note-book, found that there was a rix dollar still owing to him for an old kitchen-range, which a farmer had taken away to boil his pigs' meat on.

"That's something to do this afternoon," he said cheerfully, "it is rather hot, but I am going to fetch my rix ; and to-night we shall have something extra for supper, and to-morrow there'll be a little money to trade with."

He spoke of this only to his wife, for he had just had a vehement quarrel with Abe, who had been demanding a new pair of shoes, which they could not give him. And Abe had gone much further than he had intended in his abuse of his father ; he had used words which he knew were unjust ; he had railed against his father and mother, heaping reproaches upon them, tormenting them and himself ; doing injury to his real feeling of affection for them ; untrue to his real self.

And therefore his father did not ask him to ■ this errand for him. And that was how the terrible thing came about.

A month ago the boy had happened to be walking near the home of the farmer who had bought the kitchen-range, and had gone in and taken the money. Being short of pocket-money he had broken into the rix dollar, and had been afraid to tell his father, and in the end he had spent the last penny of it on sweets during his long solitary tramps about the neighbourhood.

He had wanted to stop his father going to the farmer, he had tried to say to him : "Don't go." But the words had stuck in his throat. And he stood looking dumbly, dejectedly after his father ; he walked dejectedly, dumbly round the house in a circle all that afternoon, afraid of meeting his father on his return, and yet wanting to be there to pity his humiliation.

He was not at home when Levi Velleman came back about four o'clock, and dropped into a chair, cursing the boy. "More than four weeks ago," he told his wife, "and there I stood like a fool in front of that farmer, To walk all that way there and back in this scorching heat, three hours there and back. And that scamp doesn't say a word, and lets me go as if there was nothing wrong . . . Wouldn't one——"

His eyes glowed wildly. And then Abe came in, and would so much have liked to say to him :

"It was terribly wrong of me to let you go on that fool's errand. I wanted to stop you, but somehow I could not speak. I am so sorry. Please forgive me. Let me hug you, father dear. Tell me what to do to have you forgive me."

That is what Abe wanted to say. But he said *nothing*. Then his father fell upon him, and beat him and kicked him, so that Abe grew bitter with rage, and he fell to the ground under his father's blows.

Levi the Waiter had lost his temper with the boy. He took a stick, and he hit him with it, and the boy lay still and motionless, with his face down on the floor. Levi, suddenly frightened, threw away the stick, and called out in an angry voice, but full of uneasiness: "Get up!"

And when Abe did not stir, Levi shuddered and cried with fear in his voice: "Get up, child!"

Then he bent down, and lifted the lad's arm; but it fell back again with a dull thud. Levi did not know what to do. He felt as if his body had been torn in two. He rushed out of the house, out of the village. He saw only the horizon in front of him; he heard only a groan, his own groan. He wanted to fling himself up against the horizon, and tear it down with his nails. He could not do that. But there was a fairly deep canal on his way, just the thing to complete Abe's great day. Levi was not the man to take his own life. He did not throw himself into the canal, but he was not strong enough then to struggle out of it when he fell in.

At the inquest it came out that being in a great state of excitement, he had slipped down the slope into the canal, and when he had found himself in the water he had not had the energy to climb out again, and so he had been drowned.

And there had been no reason for it at all. For at home, at about the same moment that he slipped into the canal, Abe Velleman had got up, quite uninjured. He had only been playing, the romantic boy that he was; he had shammed so well that he had really taken in his father. He had acted with consummate skill. His father had actually been frightened.

Of course, he was very sorry afterwards, for he soon realised that he had really loved his father. But it was too late then. And he had to be his mother's breadwinner for the rest of her life.

## WEESPERSTRAAT

By SIEGFRIED VAN PRAAG

*Translated by A. VAN SON*

Siegfried Emanuel van Praag, born in Amsterdam, 1899. Graduate of Amsterdam University. Was at first a teacher of French, but afterwards devoted himself entirely to literature. A novelist and essayist, who has made a special study of Jewish literature.

Chief works : " West Joden en hun Letterkunde sinds 1860 " (Western Jews and their Literature since 1860), " Ghetto," " Sam Levita's Levensdans " (Sam Levita's Life), " La Judith," " Cabaret der Plaatsvervangers " (Cabaret of Substitutes) and " Een Man van Aanzien " (A Man of Distinction), which was in 1931 awarded the Prize of the Society for Dutch Literature.

LIFE was quiet ; their life was very quiet. They were a married couple in Israel, such as there were and are many. An old man and an old woman. Had they lived in the land of Canaan, they would have sat quietly under their fig tree, and watched the landscape in front of them. And so now in the land, the town, the street of their exile they did likewise—they watched the street.

And since their thoughts were only the reflection of what they saw, I cannot do better than tell you what they saw. They lived in Weesperstraat. You Dutch folk, all of you, who have given our people a home in your country, a dwelling-place to rest in, you cannot realise what you have given us. You cannot know how much it means to us, and most of all how much it meant to us—that part of Amsterdam, from Nieuwmarkt to Weesperplein—it is to thousands of simple people, and the sons of simple people like a piece of land in Eretz Israel

Weesperstraat ! A street like many others. Houses, one next to the other, high and low, houses that have shrunk, are bowed with age, hunching themselves up small ; houses that are tall and fine and stand erect, above their fellows ; houses with skins blackened with smoke, the result of living long in town staring hard through large window-panes. And modern houses, too, built with grey and red bricks that are neatly separated from each other by stripes of white mortar, and with small straight panes,

which do not move in their frames with old age, as the others do. And all along the street, the shops in which can be found everything that the inhabitants of the street desire.

But this ■ only the exterior. A street is made by men, and in the street men love their own image, just as God loves Himself in His creation. For when the twelve tribes were dashed against the rocks of history, Israel divided into new tribes. Dan, Issachar, Naphthali, Judah, Ephraim, Menasseh and all the rest were no more, but in their place came the ghettos of Amsterdam, London, Warsaw, New York. In each ghetto arose a new tribe of Israel. And this is one of the greatest of joys ; to be a tribe, to know that you belong to a tribe, to be allowed to feel that you are one of the tribe.

The inhabitants of Weesperstraat were aware of that. They all knew each other. "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," says the Preacher. And increase of acquaintances may perhaps also be an increase of sorrow. But an increase in recognising things already familiar is an increase of happiness.

And to those two old people, recognising was their sole occupation. They sat at the window, the old woman in a red plush armchair, a heritage from her mother's home, the old man in a yellow plush easy chair, left from his father's home, and they looked out both of them, and "recognised." He wore a skull-cap—it was green and had a lot of yellow embroidery on it, and the white locks fell down his cheeks ; while she wore on her smooth wig a little white bonnet, that looked like a withered flower. His face was thin, he had little whiskers, and deep furrows ran from his eyes into his sallow skin. He had a long pipe between his thick lips. Her face was round, and full of wrinkles, as thin as if they were drawn with a pin ; her eyes were half shut with joy, as if they closed upon an inner treasure ; her mouth opened at times, but soon shut again, to hang down from the rest of her face in silence.

And as they sat like that, quiet as lizards, each on its branch, their faces and heads would suddenly move. The old man nodded two or three times, long, wise nods, pulled at his pipe and leaned back again in his chair. The woman nodded as many as twenty times in the same space of time, quickly, rapidly ; she opened her half-closed eyes for a moment, wide and gay, to let them gradually return to their usual position of being half shut.

They had recognised one of the tribe. Mostly old people. A man who had always been very poor, and was now well to do, thanks to his children, who had even provided him with a fur-coat, in which he was tottering along comfortably to the Meyerplein Synagogue. For the most interesting passers-by were those going to the Synagogue.

In this case the nod from husband to wife meant : " That's Mosche Groen ; he is going to Synagogue. He is well to do now. Things change, used to be as poor as Job. He's got good children. . . . "

All this and no less lay in that look : ascertainment—conclusion—philosophy !

And sometimes their nodding meant something quite different : " Look, there's Yitschok Polak, as poor as ten Jobs ! Used to be rich once. Things do change ! Wasn't he proud once ! " And they looked pityingly at the bowed figure with the shabby coat and dusty shoes.

Sometimes their nod was respectful. That was the Rabbi or Chazan passing. And if the nod was not quite respectful and a smile hovered on their lips, it meant " His sermon this Sabbath was not much good ! " Or : " His voice is getting poor. "

But when the nodding was very kind, especially the woman's, they saw Cohen's little one, the grandchild of an old friend, poking its head out of its perambulator that was being pushed along by the mother. Then the woman's face shone happily, and her nod meant : " What a lovely child ! " while the man's was meant to suggest that he considered it dangerous to take a child like that along a crowded street.

They recognised the neighbours, the barber across the way, with his black, twirled-up moustache ; and the butcher, with his blood-stained apron, and his butcher's knife in his fist, talking quietly to a passer-by.

Quite a separate tribe in Israel !

The old people looked up, too, at the sky. Sometimes the sun poured treasures of light upon the pavement, so that the street was filled with it, and the rooms and the houses. The asphalt gleamed, the children played happily in the dust ; little girls, with the air of grown-ups, held their tots of brothers by the hand, dragging them along when these wanted to sit down in the street.

Little girls, with their legs drawn up high, were basking on the door-steps of their homes, at the side of their old grandmothers. And troops of boys and girls ; strings of girls, arm in arm ; boys, romping, teasing each other like monkeys ; shabby girls and well-dressed girls ; boys with knickerbockers, stockings, collars and ties, all looking as if they were coming down—all went whirling by on their way to school . . . It diverted the old people. And the sun penetrated into their souls, and shone there, too.

Sometimes there was rain. And then they watched the people flying past in all directions, scurrying to shelter like worms into the earth, and sparrows to the roofs and trees. The people fled into the tram-cars, huddled under cover on the steps of the basement-shops, wherever the street offered shelter. The rain splashed on the glimmering ground. And the raindrops fell into the puddles, that had collected and then jumped up again. At such a time the two old people were glad of the safety of their room. Their life was like a gathered crop. They were just waiting, perfectly still and quiet. And they only nodded. Not only Weesperstraat was their inheritance, but also a bit of the canal which cuts through Weesperstraat, bringing a little water and fresh air, and some trees within the horizon of the exiled people.

The other members of the tribe could not see the canal. That filled the old people with joy. Because from their window they could just catch a glimpse of the water. A light Dutch sky, which set one wondering whether the blue had spread over the white, or whether the white flecks had spread over the blue ; sometimes there were clouds, too, for ever changing their shape, now elongated, then hunched up, and then next moment rounded, as if they were being kneaded somewhere up in the sky. Only one tree was visible, an overhanging tree, whose leaves sometimes moved softly in the wind, and were sometimes whipped by autumnal showers. And when the two old people saw this, they nodded. And their nodding meant : " One of God's wonderful works." And it meant also : " A fine house, ours. Who would have expected a tree in this street ? "

So they looked, and filled their lives with watching the members of the tribe who could not yet afford to " look," whose life was still their working day, and whose Sabbath had not yet come.

Until one morning, the old woman saw her husband coming

back from the "Meyerplein," where he had attended the service in the Synagogue, with his glossy silk hat on his head, his Prayer book in his hand; and right in front of her window he was knocked down and run over by a bicycle. And outside his own door, surrounded by many members of his tribe, who "recognised" him, he passed away. . . .

Then the blinds were sadly let down, and they looked no more.



## MISCELLANEOUS SECTION

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## AN INTIMATE TRAGEDY

By ENRICO CASTELNUOVO

*Translated by FRANK CACHIA*

Enrico Castelnovo, born in Florence in 1839, died in Venice in 1915. Was at first a merchant, but afterwards abandoned commerce for journalism, and became editor of "La Stampa." His first novel, "La Casa Bianca," was published in 1873. He published a large number of novels and volumes of short stories the most famous of which was "Il Professor Ronnaldo," 1878; "Della Lotta," 1880; "Reminiscenze e fantasie," 1885; "Il Fallo d'una donna ovesta," 1897; "Le Ultime Novelle," 1906; "I Moncalvi," 1908.

One afternoon on a hot July day, Guido Perrero, travelling alone in a first-class carriage, had just dropped off into a doze when the train stopped abruptly at the little station of San Giovanni. It woke him up, and he rubbed his eyes and looked out of the window. He saw an elderly lady get out of the carriage next to his own, and ■ across to a group of three or four sad-looking men who were waiting for her on the platform, look into their eyes questioningly, and, reading the answer in their faces, raise her handkerchief to her lips and burst in tears.

One of the men put his arm round her waist, and supported her carefully out of the station.

The station telegraphist, who was walking up and down alongside the train with a friend, happened to be in front of Perrero's coach when he remarked sympathetically: "That is the grandmother of that poor boy Soncini, who was struck down with diphtheria two days ago. . . ."

"A terrible disease!" said his friend—"Carries off ever so many people every year."

"Not only here"—the telegraphist went on, as the train began to move out . . . "but in the whole district . . . at Belcolle the Gavardo child is dying . . . probably dead by now."

Guido Perrero went white as washed linen, and put out his hand almost before he knew it, as if to call over the telegraphist, but he was not sure that his movement had been seen, and the train was already leaving the station and passing into the tunnel.

He drew back his hand sharply from the window, and dropped into his seat.

Was he dreaming, or had he really heard that the Gavardo child was dying . . . was probably dead by now ?

Gavardo, the golden-haired, pretty, chubby-like fellow, who used to run to him full of happiness, fling himself at him, and throw his arms round his neck, with his milk and rose cheek nestling against his face ! . . . dying . . . probably already dead. Young Giulietto, the last, but the most tenacious link of the chain that Guido Perrero had dragged after him for the last six years. . . . How often he had made up his mind to go away, far away, across the sea and finally end this dangerous state of affairs . . . but he had not been able to face the prospect of not seeing Giulietto ! Only two days ago he had gone away, determined to exert every ounce of will-power he had and harden himself to remain away for a long time, but on the journey he had seemed to hear the voice of the child, who had said to him when he had left : " Come back soon, and bring me a nice toy "—and here he was now going back already with his bag full of toys, there on the rack above his head !

When the train steamed out of the black tunnel, the sun was shining on the side on which he sat, and being alone in the compartment, he went to sit at the opposite corner, following with his eyes the silvery stream of the river, which, flowing lazily, lapped the base of the surrounding hills, his mind in the grip of one single thought—Giulietto dying ! Giulietto dead !

Of course, there were also moments (since the human soul has bottomless pits of egoism) in which, above and beyond his calamity and grief, he thought of the freedom and peace it would bring him. . . . With Giulietto gone he would be released from his tie with Anna Gavardo—Nini—as he called her.

She did not love him any more, and he had tired of her. . . . She was not a woman whose love lasted. She had loved him years ago, and with her husband constantly away, for months at a time, busy on railway construction in uninhabitable and unsafe countries where he could not take her—it had become a habit, until the habit had slowly frozen. . . . Giulietto remained. . . . Anna, as soon as she knew she was going to be a mother, had with the impetuosity of a woman in love said to Perrero—" This child is yours "—and after the birth of the child, when they were alone and yielded

to their love, she had often repeated the phrase, and many times, the storm gathering over their love had faded when they looked together down at the child in its cot.

But recently Anna had suggested doubts, saying "Who can be sure of it? . . . When there is a husband, and one has been a wife to him, too, sometimes." . . .

That had been a hard blow to Perrero. She was not telling him anything new, for he had always known that when Gavardo was at home he was her husband . . . but it was cruel to suggest that Giulietto might not be his. She was, after all, a middle-class woman, who did not want any scandal, and she had probably come to the conclusion that it was time to encase herself in legality—forget the past, remove all cause of suspicion from her husband, and protect Giulietto's position and keep him from discovering something that would pain him in after years. But Perrero could not reconcile himself to the thought that Giulietto might not be his son. . . .

"He is mine . . . he is mine," he repeated fiercely whenever the mother advanced her doubts. "He looks like me, he is like me, in features, temperament, voice, everything!"

And now Giulietto was dying! Might be already dead!

Perrero was suddenly horror-stricken. What demon had possessed him? What an egoist he was to sit there thinking only how Giulietto's death would affect him. As if he were the only one whom it would affect!

As a limpid, fresh wave washes away the mud left by a turbid and slimy wave, so fresher thoughts and reflections followed into Perrero's mind. Anna Gavardo was no longer a cold, selfish woman, out only for her own peace of mind—he saw her instead as a tender-hearted, unselfish mother, consecrating herself entirely to her child, finding in him alone the joy that marriage had not given her, the bliss for which love had exacted from her a high price, of tears and fears. He pictured her now, alone, in the house, at the bed of her sick child, her dying child . . . perhaps her dead child. . . . Alone, for she had no parents or close relatives, and her husband was far away, and even a telegram could not bring him back in time. . . . But when had Giulietto become ill? Little more than a week ago, he was a picture of health and vivacity, sturdy and strong! . . . Of course, diphtheria strikes rapidly. That other child had been struck only two days ago.

... Why hadn't Anna sent him a message ! She knew his address. ... He too had failed her ... not like in the old days. But now that did not matter. He would be at her side, at the sick bed of his Giulietto.

Perrero had set out on his journey intending to call at the Villa Gavardo about sunset, and to go there after he had first attended to some business in the town. But now he could not think of delaying a minute, and he decided to get off at the first station, from which he could walk to the house and save about twenty minutes. It was now two o'clock, and he would be at the station at about three.

That hour seemed ages ! He could not sit down again, and he paced about the compartment, stopping now and then to look through the windows, over at the horizon, paying no heed to the scorching sun pouring into his compartment, the smoke and the dust that penetrated to his lungs, and the black soot that settled on his face and hands. As soon as the train slackened speed on entering the station, he flung open the door, and stood on the footboard, waiting to jump off.

"Hey ! wait a minute you !" shouted the guard, motioning to him not to jump.

But Perrero, notwithstanding his forty years, paid no heed, nimbly jumped without any injury, and then to calm the frightened official, who was coming towards him, he said :

"I'm in a hurry ! I am leaving my luggage in the train, first-class compartment No. 6279 A. My valet will be waiting for me at the central station ; he will be surprised when I fail to arrive. ... My name is Signor Perrero. ... Please tell him that I had to get off here, but I shall be in town before the evening. Meanwhile, allow him to take my two bags. ... He ■ a tall youth ... clean-shaven ... in livery. ... His name is Carlo. ... Thank you ; please take this."

The guard had meant to refuse both the commission and the five lire, which the queer traveller had thrust into his hands, but ■ was already too late, for Perrero had rushed through the barrier, throwing his ticket to the collector as he ran. It was lucky for him that he was a regular traveller on that line, and well known at the station, otherwise his behaviour might have made them detain him.

About a hundred yards away, he turned to the right, just where

the barrier was crossed by a narrow street which wound zigzag up to the top of the hill, where Belcolle was. Except for his own foot-falls he could hear nothing but the monotonous and insistent hum of the harvest-fly ; now and again a puff of wind rustled the leaves, a twig fell, and there was the slight quiver of the wings of a swallow above a hedge. Not a dog barking nor any sound from the people in the scattered cottages, all deep in slumber. Men and beasts all resting, waiting for the sun to cool. But now the sun was still hot, though it was already beginning to set on the horizon. It was sending its rays down, on the wheat-fields spread out at the foot of the hill, and on the vineyards that clothed the hill in terraces up to the top. High up, among the pine trees, only partially visible from below, was the white front of the Villa Gavardo. . . . Perrero, an enthusiastic alpinist, who thought nothing of ascending great mountains, now felt his legs shake under him with the exertion of climbing the little hill. The sweat was pouring down his forehead, and over his wrists and arms, and a choking pain cut short his breath ; but his impatience to reach his destination spurred him on, and his anguish pushed him farther upon his way. The white villa was now completely hidden among the trees, but he had reached the palisade and here was the small door leading to the vegetable patch, which adjoined the garden—this was a short cut to the house, saving five minutes. Luckily, the door was not locked. Perrero opened it, and walked in, looking round him. The heat rising from the garden was more intense, with the ferment of the sun-soaked earth and the plants germinating below. In the air there was the drone of wasps and hornets. He passed the gardener's lodge where he could have obtained information, slipped through the vine trellis, and at last he heard coming from the kitchen the sound of voices and the clatter of utensils. . . . He could have asked here, but his heart failed him. He stepped on tiptoe through the silent corridor, protected from the sun by drawn blinds and thick blue roller-blinds—stopped there for a while in the cool dimness, as if taking stock, then panting up the stairs he found his way to Anna's room, which was also Giulietto's room, pushed open the door and in a strangled voice cried : " Nini ! Nini ! "

A man's voice answered him : " Who is there ? " and a tall, strong-limbed man came to the door, repeating " Who is there ? "

Behind him came Anna, very pale.

Taken aback to find himself in the presence of Engineer Alberto Gavardo, whom he had believed in Rumania, Perrero stammered :

" You. . . Here ? And Giulietto ? "

" Giulietto is out of danger," said the Engineer.

Perrero raised his arm to heaven in a gesture of thankfulness, and made a move to go into the room.

" Giulietto is asleep," said Gavardo, barring the way.

Then he added caustically : " Why were you surprised to find me at home ? And why Nini ? "

Before Perrero had time to recover from his stupor caused by these questions hurled at him aggressively, Anna had intervened. She had recovered her composure, and without a tremor she said :

" Close friends call me Nini ! "

" Men would at least say Signora Nini," retorted Gavardo.

" So they do," she replied, with amazing calm, putting her hand on her husband's shoulder. " Perrero usually calls me Signora Nini . . . but he seems distraught now. . . . He is so fond of our Giulietto . . . I don't know how he heard that he was ill. And in what exaggerated form. . . . He was travelling . . . must have broken off his journey to come here . . . we should be grateful to him."

Perrero felt Anna's eyes fixed on him, and heard behind the apparent composure of her voice, a desperate plea :

If you have loved me, if you love Giulietto, if it is anything to you to save us from dishonour, and this home in which you have tasted happiness from ruin, say nothing that will discredit me, do nothing that will make my husband suspect.

Perhaps, he thought, Gavardo had discovered something that had brought him rushing back from Rumania ; somebody might have sent him an anonymous letter ! And now he, Perrero, by his inopportune appearance, and his indiscreet cry of Nini ! had probably strengthened his suspicions.

But the joy of knowing Giulietto out of danger was too great to allow him to dwell too much on other matters.

" Yes," he mumbled, " I heard it while I was travelling . . . overheard it quite by accident, and it shook me up. But let us not talk about that . . . now, that he is out of danger."

" The doctor is positive about it," said Gavardo.

"It was very serious, very serious indeed," interjected Anna, "a matter of hours . . . but when Alberto arrived, his condition had already begun to improve. . . . Thank you all the same, Perrero, for your solicitude . . . and please forgive my husband."

"I was rather abrupt," Gavardo apologised. "Excuse me—it ■ the fault of always living in out of the way places, among rough people."

And he coldly gave his hand to Perrero, who took it coldly, almost unaware what he was doing.

Anna said to a maid who was just going into the bedroom: "If the child wakes, call me." Then she continued: "As soon as he is convalescent, we shall take him to the mountains, for a few weeks . . . and then . . ."

Her voice faltered, and her gaze became more penetrating.

"And then," she said firmly, "we shall all leave Italy, all three."

"Oh!" exclaimed Perrero.

"Yes, for about two years, until Alberto has completed the work on which he is now engaged. It is impossible to have the family always divided up. . . . And you, Perrero, were also going to leave Italy for a time, weren't you?"

"I am," he mumbled.

But he was thinking. For two years I shall not see Giulietto. How do I know if I shall see him after the two years? Perhaps I shall never see him again. And even if I do, he will have forgotten me, and I shall be like a stranger to him. . . . It ■ ended, it is all ended now!

Of course, Anna had plotted it all, this idyll of a reunited family, utterly callous to the injury she was doing him, her son's father.

And he dared not expose her, fling the truth in her face, make her feel his hate, his contempt!

But what would be the good.

Now that his eyes were getting accustomed to the dim light here, Perrero saw that Anna's face was worn and haggard with sleepless nights of watching and anxieties. . . . She did not look the same woman that he had left two weeks ago! She was heartless and a deceiver . . . but she had suffered, poor woman.

"Are you going far away?" asked Gavardo.

The question startled him, but he answered it mechanically, as ■ he were hypnotised by Anna: "Yes, oh, yes. . . . I am going

to England, and then in the autumn I shall sail to the United States. I have long wanted to see America."

"You're a lucky man, to be able to travel for pleasure," sighed the Engineer.

Anna, mindful of her duties as hostess, chimed in: "Of course, you will stay the day with us, won't you? And then Giulietto can see you when he wakes. . . ."

"Do," said Gavardo, half-heartedly echoing his wife.

But Perrero was gradually regaining his will. And his will told him to refuse. Why stay longer at the villa? To prolong his torment? To watch these two torn souls—one racked with suspicion, the other with fear? He might see Giulietto, but not alone; he would not be able to hold him to his heart, to shed one tear. It was best to go now.

He thanked them for their invitation, promised to see them again before he went abroad, and said that he could not stay now. Neither Gavardo nor Anna repeated the invitation. But they offered to take him to town in their car. And to that he agreed.

In the car, while they were going through a dark alley, Perrero thought he felt Anna's hand seeking his; it seemed to him that she was wanting to whisper something to him. . . . He shrank from her, as if she were a snake, revolted by the graveyard smell that comes from dead loves. Without Giulietto, Anna was nothing to him.

When he got out, and they drove away, it seemed to him as if the door of the car had closed on a tomb, in which lay his child.

Gavardo was not the father. Gavardo did not deserve to be the father, always away from home, from wife and child. Giulietto hardly knew him.

But then an inner voice rebuked him. Gavardo did not live away from Italy three-quarters of the year because he liked it—he was working hard, in strange places, exposed to hardship, to sun, wind, rain and frost, so that his wife and child should live in comfort, hoping that one day he would be able to return home and live at peace, with his family, the reward of his years of toil.

And this was his reward, to return to a wife who had not been true, to a child that was not his, and torn by suspicion. Perrero tried to put himself in Gavardo's place; what would he have

done ? But he was a gentleman, and gentlemen do not compromise when their honour is at stake. He would have challenged the seducer to a duel, would have turned the adulteress out of his home, put the child away in a boarding-school, and endeavoured to forget his marital troubles by inflicting such troubles upon his friends. . . .

But Gavardo, anxious not to break up the family, not to have an open scandal was willing to wipe out the past, and take Anna and Giulietto with him into his exile. . . . Clearly then, Gavardo was not a gentleman !

His manservant, who had waited in vain for him at the station, came to open the door.

" Did you get my suit-cases ? " Perrero asked him.

" Yes, sir, I brought them along. If you will give me the keys, I shall unpack."

" Presently. Is the bath ready ? "

" Yes, sir."

" Very well. I am leaving again to-night. And remember, I am not in to anyone."

" What time will you have dinner, sir ? "

" See that it is ready by eight. I am leaving for Milan, by the last train, about midnight."

When he came out of the bathroom, Perrero, who had now fully made up his mind, went to his study, and wrote a few lines to Gavardo. A telegram had arrived which had compelled him to leave sooner than he had expected—he wrote. He would stop at Milan for three days, at the Hotel Continental. He begged him and Signora Nini to excuse him for not coming again to see them before he left, he hoped that Giulietto would soon recover, and meanwhile, he was sending him some toys, and his love.

When he had sealed the letter, he asked his manservant to bring him his two suit-cases, and taking out of one of them the toys he had bought for the child, he wrapped them into a parcel, which he tied up himself (his hands were trembling), and steadying his voice to hide his emotion, he said to the man : " First thing to-morrow morning, take this letter and parcel to Belvolle, to the Villa Gavardo. . . . Ask how the child is, and let me know at Milan."

" Very good, sir. Will you be away long ? "

" I think so. . . . I'll write to you. See that the house ■

looked after. You can go now. I shall ring ■ I need you again."

As soon as he found himself alone, Perrero broke down, sitting there at his desk, and the tears, so long kept back, poured down his cheeks. He was thinking of Giulietto, thinking of the toys that in a few days would be broken, as his life was now broken.

## THE FUNERAL ORATION

*By* SABATINO LOPEZ

*Translated by* FRANK CACHIA .

Sabatino Lopez, born in 1867, at Leghorn. Doctor of Laws. Professor at the Academy at Brera. Editor of the "Secolo XIX." President of the Università Popolare in Milan, and director of the Società degli Autori. With Pirandello and Benelli, one of the best of contemporary Italian playwrights. Many of his plays have been translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese and Polish. Recently appointed a member of the Italian Government Committee for the preservation of art and antiquities in Italy set up under Royal decree.

SOME death announcements nowadays say "No flowers by request," but I would rather read "No speeches by request."

It will be a great day when that happens.

I am, of course, thinking of myself. My career as a public orator is almost finished. I always obtained my best successes in after-dinner speeches. Orators, like chefs, have their speciality—some chefs do their best in stews, others in sweets—while some orators shine at academic meetings, and others at public demonstrations. . . . I was an after-dinner speaker. My friends used to call me a speaker "magniloquente" (loquacious after meals).

It was envy, of course—for when I rose to speak, even the waiters would stop serving and listen. One was so moved once that he poured half a bottle of wine on a pair of new trousers I was wearing. But it was champagne, which does not stain.

Now I am an old man, but still, after dinner, I am like Demosthenes.

But I have never cared to address the dead . . . the dead cannot hear and the living who listen blow their nose when they are moved and wonder whether they will be late for dinner.

But at banquets, after the food and the wine, people like to listen to speeches. In fact, are more anxious to know who the speakers are, than what the menu is. At the worst, ■ the speaker bores you, you can drop off to sleep and say that it was the fault of the wine, that was so excellent that it made you drowsy.

But a funeral is something altogether different ; there is no clapping to encourage you, or interruption to goad you on, and the more moved you are, the worse your speech becomes.

So that every time I was asked to speak at a funeral I refused. But one day, I was caught and I couldn't get out of it.

It was an old friend of mine who let me in for it—a man who had been my friend for forty years. No wonder they say, save me from my friends. I'll manage to keep the women off myself. Though there is no longer any need to be on guard against the women now. They no longer come buzzing around me. I'm too old.

I was coming down the Via Assarotti one morning, the street that winds up to Staglieno. I had returned to Genoa only the previous evening, and it was infernally hot. At the beginning of the street, I heard the blast of bugles—out of tune, of course—and I saw a masonic banner fluttering in the wind, looking as if it were having a fight with the bearer, trying to knock him down. Behind it came the funeral procession, and the coffin, on which lay a Garibaldi red shirt. I doffed my hat, and started to move off, when following the coffin I saw the Garibaldist Colonel Betocchi—an excellent gourmet—who winked at me to join him.

"He wants to tell me something," I thought. "It is really a long time since I last saw him, and there is something I want to tell him, too." So I fell in behind the dead . . . beside the living.

"What's the news?" I asked.

"Come along with me," he said.

"Who is the dead man?" I asked.

"Never mind that," he answered. "We'll come back together."

"But I must . . ." I objected.

"We'll come back together," he repeated.

So I went along with him.

At the Old Gate, I thought to myself, "This is where the procession breaks up and we go back. . . ."

But no ! Colonel Betocchi caught hold of my arm, and marched on with a fine air of mourning. So I, too, pulled a doleful face as if I were the chief mourner, and the favourite heir.

As we trudged along through the wind and the dust, I tried to get Betocchi to talk, but he looked daggers at me :

"Silence," he cried, and I shut up.

At last we reached the cemetery, the coffin was put down, and we all gathered round it. My friend Betocchi holds me fast by the arm, and says :

"Citizens ! my friend Paoletti will now speak to our dead friend."

It is all very well to say as Horace does : "If you want me to weep, you must first weep yourself. . . ." But one must know what one is to weep for . . . and I did not know ! All I knew was that I stood in the presence of a dead Garibaldist—a male—though I could not swear even to that, for there have been women Garibaldists as well. . . . There was the dead man, sure enough, but people die, after all, every day, and it is difficult to shed tears merely about a death, without knowing who has died.

There were two boys near the coffin, but were they the dead man's children ? Or his nephews ? Or his neighbour's children ? Or the sons of fellow-Garibaldists ? And what was the cause of his death ? Must I praise his sobriety ? Supposing he had died of hiccups ? Should I deplore his awful end, his terrible sufferings ? Had he breathed his last with a sigh ? Or severed his veins like Seneca ? Should I rail against Fate ? Was he fifty years of age, or sixty ? Pessimist or optimist ? Genoese, Lombard, Hungarian or Turk ? I didn't know a thing ?

Candidly, I felt uneasy. My first thought was to protest, bow to the assembly and leave.—But I could not own myself defeated like that. Colonel Betocchi was taking my measure with eyes full of mocking derision. So I pulled myself together. "You think you have cornered me, do you ? You don't suppose I can get out of it ? You wait and see !" —I thought to myself.

What did I say ? I don't remember it all. But I felt that since I could not deal with the living Garibaldist Colonel, I would deal with the dead Garibaldist. And I proceeded to do so.

"What was your name ?" . . . I began, and then stopped. I kept silent for a while. One of the poor devils standing around stared at me in stupefaction, and was about to blurt out the answer, but his friend standing next to him pulled him by the coat, and whispered in his ear that my question was only a rhetorical flight. So was my silence.

That was good. But I had to continue.

"What was your name ?" I repeated. "I do not wish to know

it. Your name was the name of a people, and you embodied the soul, the dauntless soul of the people :

" If the people once awake,  
God Himself the lead will take,  
And arm them with His thunderbolts."

How these lines of Mameli came in, I do not know ; but I saw all round me approving heads and I heard a soft voice whisper :

" Doesn't he speak well ! Poetry ! "

I felt that I was getting away with it. My friend Betocchi stopped sneering, and he too began to nod approval.

" What are you leaving after you ? " I cried, and then, beholding the two lads who stood by the coffin stricken with grief, I plunged boldly, and said :

" What are you leaving after you ? What heritage do you bequeath your sons ? "

But Betocchi shook his head to indicate that there were no sons, so I tried another course :

" I know that you begot no sons. But there are your sons in spirit, the generation that has to carry on your work . . . for those who are the children of our thoughts and of our soul are more our children than those begotten of our flesh. What heritage do you bequeath your sons ? "

I dwelt on his virtues, the great things he had done . . . the red shirt fired me—red as the glow of the dying sun, red as the blood poured out for our country, red as the generous wine which bubbles in the vats, source of strength and energy . . . red as . . .

I unloaded a cargo of red . . . and the colour pleased.

At the end they all applauded me, and a colossus of a fellow, a full inch taller than I am, threw his arms round my neck.

" You have spoken so wonderfully ! And everything so true ! You must have been to him like a brother ! "

## MIRIAM'S HAIR

By ISAAC SAMOKOVLIJA

*Translated by H. E. KENNEDY*

Isaac Samokovlija, born in Sarajevo, Jugo-Slavia, 1890. One of the leading Serb writers. Famous for his tales of Jewish life in Bosnia. Has been translated into French, German and other languages and included in many Continental anthologies. His collection of short stories "From Spring to Spring" is an outstanding work in Jugo-Slav literature. Although he has introduced the Jewish theme into Serbian literature, he does not devote himself exclusively to it, and has written a great many stories of non-Jewish life in Bosnia. A psychologist, particularly interested in the conflict between tradition and modern ways, and above all in the life of the proletariat.

THE children hated her, and it was rarely that she wasn't in tears when she came home. They hit her, they pulled her hair, and threw dust and mud at her. And Miriam was ever quiet and timid. She sat at home, moved her toys from one place to another and mournfully put her dolls to bed. She looked out of the window at the street, she heard the shouting of the children and she sighed and went out to play with them. Let them hit her, let them mock her, her childish habit forced her to do what was hateful to her will.

They called her mockingly: "Baby," "Yellow Hair," and other names like that. And the big, black-haired boy, Abram, two or three years older than she, led the other boys and girls when they attacked little Miriam.

"Tease her!" he cried, and ran after her, tripped her up, then stood by with a little stick in his hand and his legs apart, and gravely looked on while Miriam began to cry and the children, though she was younger than they, pushed her, kicked her. Some of the little girls spit at her.

But when any of the children cried warningly "Mochoro!" they all ran away, rushed across the planks that led up to little doors, and disappeared into the darkness of the houses.

Mochoro was Miriam's father, and was generally recognised as

an irritable man. He pulled one's ears, and hit one with a stick so that tears came from one's eyes.

And there were few among the children who could boast that they had avoided bearded Mochoro's stick and his heavy hand.

Because of Miriam there were continual disputes among the fathers and mothers of the community, and they bore ill will to each other on account of pretty, fair-haired Miriam.

"As if there were no children except her! He cherishes and adores her as if she were a princess. The little donkey!"

"And nobody but Miriam has yellow hair. Who knows where her fair head came from, whence came that hair!"

"Nobody, nobody must ever look at her, the rich, great lady!" said the older, sensible women.

"And that a girl and an only daughter should be so unlike her race! What a misfortune!"

Mochoro, in spite of all, loved his little Miriam devotedly. He bought her little frocks and on Saturdays he led her about by the hand and was perfectly happy. He took her round to visit his people, and showed them what a lovely little frock he had bought Miriam, what shoes he had got for her. Miriam had, too, a little striped parasol, and she had two little dolls with fair, curly hair and eyes as blue as the sky. And she herself was fair and rosy like a doll.

In the street with the others she was a real prodigy among the Jewish children, who had black, curly hair and big, dark eyes, went barefoot, and wore old, stained and dirty clothes. . . .

She went tearfully out to the courtyard gate, her hair tidily done, in little plaits, and with several little, fair curls on her forehead and temples; with a clean apron on, with shoes and long stockings. She was looked at from the windows, and stared at in the street where the children jumped about or sat on the pavement playing with little stones, baked mud cakes and made earthen scones.

It was all quite irresistible to her and she fain would sit down too in the dust and mix the clay with her little hands, from which would come forth round loaves, little scones, to be set in a row on the ground and put in little Mazaltina's oven and baked. She would fain run about with the children and do as they did and run across the sloping boards to the little doors as they did.

Standing in the gateway she bit the edge of her white apron.

"Little Miriam, better sit on the threshold and not go out into the street! You know how naughty the children are," said her mother, who had crossed the yard with her sleeves turned up and her dress tucked up, with wide drawers showing beneath it.

Miriam stood thus till the children perceived her:

"There's yellow hair! There's the baby, the one with plaits, the mother's darling!"

"She has a white apron!"

"Oof, as if she were dressed for Passover!"

"Neither Passover nor Judgment Day make any difference to her."

"Yellow goat!"

Little Simeon tiptoed up to her and stood by his brother. Black Abram came up too, and while little Simeon caught at her apron with dirty hands, another child called to her:

"Come, Miriam, we're going to the fountain to get water to make scones."

He took her by the hand and led her along. Her blue eyes lit up, she went with him.

"To the water! To the water!" Abram shouted the order and the children started all together. Little pots, shaking and clattering, made a noise. When they got to the fountain Abram seized one of the little pots, put some dust into it and filled it with water. With his hand he stopped up a hole there was in the bottom of it, and gave it to Miriam to carry.

"Take it. That's water to make scones with!"

Miriam took the little pot, and a stream of water flowed down her apron. She stood surprised. The water streamed down her stockings and shoes. Her mouth quivered, she was going to cry. The children stood round her and stared at her with covert, uncertain intention.

"Stop the hole, stop it, silly! The water'll flow out," yelled Black Abram. Miriam looked at the pot and dropped it from her hand. The pot rolled clattering over the pavement.

"Yellow goat! Fool! You're never anything but a baby. You've got hair like a baby and eyes like a baby and an apron like a baby. You're a German. You're not a Jewess. Shame on you!" He spit into the pot, which he had picked up, and put it, upside down, on her head.

Miriam began to cry. David, the grocer, looking out of his

shop, saw what was going on, and just then Rena, Miriam's mother, ran out.

"You pig! Curse you, you brat!" She screamed and wrung her hands. "Look what they've done to my child! Lord help me!"

The children scattered and ran. Only black-haired Abram stood in the middle of the street and mocked Rena, waving his arms about.

"It's Miriam that's a brat. German! Yellow German! Baby! White head! Changeling! Mochoro's daughter! Mochoro's daughter!"

The child fell ill that very day. Before evening she was feverish. She stood there, her teeth chattering, and then she took to her bed. Rena, who had been a servant with the Ushchupli family, and had learned there the ways of rich folk, put a poultice on Miriam, gave her milk and made hot drinks for her brewed from herbs she got at the apothecary's shop.

Miriam was ill for three weeks, and during the fourth her hair suddenly began to fall out. Rena carefully collected the bits of fallen, yellow hair and put them into a handkerchief.

When the child got better her mother carried her out into the yard to be in the sun. She tied a white kerchief over her head, and told her that pretty, soft hair was growing again.

"Will it really grow, Mummy, really?"

"Yes, darling, yes it will."

"And, Mummy, I don't want it yellow, but black. Mummy, let it be black . . . black . . ."

"Yes, darling, yes."

From that day forward the child's face grew brighter. She ate more, she sat up in bed and listened to the children playing in the little street outside.

When, one morning, her mother carried her into the yard and laid her on a mattress there, she called her and whispered something into her ear. The mother wondered, and the child caught at her with her thin hands and timidly begged her to call the children.

"Let them come into the courtyard. Let them play there. Call them, Mummy, call them!"

Rena baked some white scones and then called the children. Only two or three dared to come in. The others looked through the gate.

"Come in! Miko, Rapho, Blankita!"

By a little after noon about ten had assembled. They sat down by the mattress, they sat quietly and ate scones.

"Why don't you play? Here are toys. Don't be afraid, play with the dolls!"

The little girls took the dolls, looked at them, took off their dresses, touched their heads, looked at their hair, put them sitting up and lifted up their arms.

"What rosy faces they have!"

"This one has a silk dress!"

"Look, this one's legs are sewn to her stomach!"

"Let me look! Let go, Rikita, let go!"

One remark led to another, and the children argued, saying:  
"Let me see!"

"We might make a little house for them. There's a box at our place . . . little boxes. . . . We can divide them and make two houses, one for the red-haired doll, the other for the yellow-haired one."

The children set to work. They made a pile of little stones, they plucked grass and flowers. Rapho dragged up big boxes and Miko brought little ones. Hanika found some pieces of wood.

"This'll do for a table."

"This for a mattress."

"Here's a little bottle for water. But what shall we have for a bed."

As they were playing, black-haired Abram suddenly appeared in the gateway.

Miriam shivered, turned very pale, and Abram called out to her in a shrill voice:

"How thin you've got! Was it your head that was hurting you?" he added, looking suspiciously about the yard.

"Nothing is hurting me now. I'm getting well, and I'll be able to play with you."

Abram came and stood in front of her and looked straight into her face. He felt a little uncomfortable; he felt a kind of emptiness, and under the white kerchief which Miriam wore

smoothly on her head her skull showed gauntly and her face looked very thin and pale.

"Where is your hair?" asked Abram in amaze.

"It's fallen out—it's fallen out!" cried Miriam quickly. With her thin hands she took the kerchief off her head. A little, bare head appeared, with fine, thin, short fair hair, through which her skull showed, reddish. The fine, short hair glistened in the sun. She passed her little hands over her head.

"The yellow hair has fallen out, it's fallen out and now black hair will grow instead—black hair like Rikita's."

All the children looked at Rikita, who got confused. Her little face reddened, and her big, black eyes glistened with tears. Two dimples, however, appeared near her mouth, her full, little lips trembled with emotion and glistened redly. Her thick, black tousled hair spread itself in the sun, with a bluish, metallic tint in it. She shyly bent her head.

"Like Rikita's?" inquired Abram, smilingly.

"Black! Black!"

Silence ensued. Miriam kept crumpling the white kerchief in her hands. Abram approached nearer, made as if he would say something, but again drew back. Then he caught hold of Rikita, took her by the hand and went towards the gate.

"Let's go into the street and play!" he said.

Lightly and quietly, one after the other, the children slipped out of the courtyard. Miriam remained alone on the mattress, crumpling the kerchief. Around her on all sides were the little stones, pins, striped bits of material, remains of the scones. Across a little box lay a doll on its stomach.

Miriam had clenched her teeth. She was just going to cry bitterly. Tears came into her eyes and two or three fell down her pale, little face. Just then Miko slipped into the courtyard and came up to take a little box. But suddenly Miriam started up from the mattress and shrieking, caught up in one hand a box and in the other a doll and began to hit Miko with them about the head.

"Pig, damned pig!" Rena appeared at the top of the steps, trembling with agitation.

Scarcely had Miko run to the gate with the box and retreated into the street when just behind him a toy struck the pavement and broke in two.

" Please God, you should die ! " scolded Rena, and rushed into the street, brandishing other toys.

" Carrion ! " she shouted. " Do you want my hand on you ? "

At the corner by the lamp-post she saw black-haired Abram and threw a stone at him. At that the other children shouted :

" Mochoro's daughter ! Mochoro's daughter ! "

Little Miriam, stretched on her mattress, cried and tore mercilessly at the hair of one of the dolls, silky, fair hair. . . .

## MATCH MAKING IN THE TAVERN

*By G. BUKI ROMANO*

*Translated by N. B. JOFSON*

G. Buki Romano (Rabbi Alberto Romano), born at Sarajevo, 1886. Rabbi at Ragusa, now at Monastir. One of the most important writers of to-day in Judeo-Spanish (Spagnol).

OLD Abe's tavern is dark, right enough, but very handy to drop in at. There's many a Jew who can't pass it by. Not that they drink over much. They call for a gin, take their time over it, have their bit of fun and their joke, pay, and then go out. Some go out without paying, but old Abe at once chalks up their names on the slate hanging on the wall, and so everybody knows who owes the old boy any money. There is no disgrace in it, as all those who get posted up live from hand to mouth—workmen, waiters, porters, costermongers, and the like, people, in fact, who haven't always "change" on them to pay for their drinks.

They'll pay up all right, says old Abe. I've never told a Jew yet that I won't give him credit. What's to be done? Take Mači d'Anula now. He's been out of a job for ever so long, but can I tell him that I won't give him credit? I wouldn't have the heart to do it, for I know that as soon as he gets something to do, he'll come round and pay up.

As soon as it grows dusk, all the Jews drop in at the old man's until the place is full up. They are all regular customers. Each nods "good evening" to his friends, orders his drink and sits down at the place that is kept every night for him. You mustn't think that the drinkers round any one table keep their conversation to themselves. Anybody from another table can join in the talk, and this makes it more like a private party than a public-house. Everything comes up for discussion: the congregation, the synagogue, business, women, fashion—everything under the sun. Everything is thoroughly sifted to find out the real reason why it is just so and not otherwise, or how this and that might be set right. They're up to date about everything. ■ anyone should die—which God forbid—they know to a penny how much

hard cash he has left, what his houses are worth, and what each of the heirs will be getting. Mention any business man and they know his standing, and, ■ he's on the wrong side, how much he owes.

That is how the evenings are spent in old Abe's house.

It is very rare for anyone to get drunk. They drink just till they feel happy and then drift off homewards, nice and comfortable.

One evening this week, Juda, the fent dealer, looked in rather early, sat down in a corner, and began absent-mindedly putting down one drink after another. You could see from his face that he had something serious worrying him, for he paid no attention to the talk and jokes of the others. He just looked on and went on drinking in silence, as though he were the only one there. Just then Moni Gazi came in, and, seeing no other place free, sat down by Juda.

Well, Juda, says Moni. Very down in the dumps to-night, aren't you? What's the matter? Your ship not come home?

JUDA: Nothing.

MONI: What do you mean, "nothing"?

JUDA: Nothing, I tell you. Leave me alone.

MONI: Whatever has come over you, old fellow?

JUDA: Don't worry me. I said "nothing," and that's enough.

MONI: Abe, fill up my glass for me. And Juda's, too. That's right. And now for the news.

JUDA: What news?

MONI: What do you mean, "what news"? Why, the news you're going to tell me. Get it off your chest. Think I'm going to leave you like this to-night? You're not going out of here till we find out what's wrong. I can't make it out. One moment you treat me as if I were a friend and the next you keep things secret from me.

JUDA: What's the matter with you—you and your secrets? Do you think I would keep anything from you? But the fact is, I don't feel in the mood now to tell you about it. I know that you can't help me out, and it would only worry you as it does me. That's all.

MONI: Don't trouble about me! So out with this precious piece of news. Who knows we won't find a way out. I have some quite good notions, too.

JUDA : Oh well, if you're taking it so much to heart, I'll tell you.

MONI : That's right. Abe, another glass over here ! Well, now for it.

JUDA : You know my style of living, Moni—no luxuries, just bread and cheese, but decent, eh ?

MONI : Yes, of course I do. We've not known each other since yesterday.

JUDA : Listen, then. You know well enough that I have never looked for charity, though I have had to struggle and pinch to keep the wife and the children.

MONI : Whew, why all this beating about the bush ? What is it all for ? Straight out with it, now ! It was like this or it was like that—and it's over.

JUDA : Wait a bit, or are you in a hurry to be away ? Off you go then ! You're free. I'm not keeping you.

MONI : There you go again. Don't I say that there is no talking to you sensibly ? You are on your high horse at once. I merely ask you to tell me what ■ the matter, to see if you've got it right or misunderstood things—and you flare up at once. And it isn't curiosity that makes me ask you. As though I hadn't enough troubles of my own without wanting to rack my brains over yours ! Very well, then, I don't want you to tell me the story. To show you I'm not inquisitive.

JUDA : Why so vexed all of a sudden ? Didn't I say there was no hurry ? Take it easy.

MONI : You haven't said anything to me, you only gave me my marching orders.

JUDA : Well, you're rushing me too much and I can't out with it all at once like that. Quietly, quietly, till I get myself clear.

MONI : Good, get yourself clear. Abe, fill us up another one. Well, Juda, we'll both of us get clear with this, I'm thinking.

JUDA : Let me be ! I have my troubles, and here are you worrying yourself about me.

MONI : All right ! Out with it, then.

JUDA : Wait a bit, now ! Now listen, Moni. There have been, you know, times when the Lord—praised be His name—afflicted me sorely, but still I have never begged. One day the children came home from school and told me that the Rabbi had put their names down on the clothing fund. What do you think I did ? I

went straight to the Rabbi with my grievance. Who told you, I said, that I wanted my children's names put down ? Have I ever complained to you ? I pestered him so much that he never took it on himself to do that again. I want you to understand, you see, that I have never looked for favours from people. And then the Lord came to my aid. Little by little business looked up. I was able to buy the bit of a house where I now live. It is not a palace, but still it's worth a tidy bit. It was hardest till the children were brought up ; but now—long life to them—they are out of their swaddling clothes. I settled my boys in business or put them to a trade, and they are getting on well. There is only a daughter left at home. Ah, you should see her, a great big girl, high as a house. Old enough to be married, too, and ever since the wife has been on at me : " Time to look round for someone for our Esther."

MONI : Ha, ha ! now we're hot.

JUDA : What do you mean ?

MONI : Nothing. Go on now. Another one for us, Abe.

JUDA : No more, I've had enough.

MONI : Who's asking you anything ?

JUDA : Why, who else but you ! On top of all my worries, not to be in a fit state to get back to-night !

MONI : Don't trouble about that. We'll go together. Go on now.

JUDA : Well, then, the other evening the wife comes and tells me that Esther has been walking out for some time with the son of Bellows Joe as they call him. I don't know if you know him. He's a barber. All right, I say. Not a bad young chap, we'll have a try. Something might be managed. Now I am not a slacker, as you know, so I put Jack from next door on to the job. That is his business, of course. He came to me to-day with the answer. I got hold of him, he says. Well, and is it good news you bring ? Ye-es, he says, but out with the money bags. Eh, how much then ? Well, I think the job is as good as done, he says ; the young man is looking out for a wife and the girl suits him, but he means to set up on his own account and needs fifty thousand. God preserve us, I say ; where in the world am I to raise so much ? Are you mad, he says. You know you have a daughter on your hands, and do you expect to get her off for nothing ? It is too much, I say. Too much ? How too much ? A mint of money,

I say. Not at all, says he ; out with the dibs and we shall finish the job. Listen, I say, I was prepared for twenty thousand. I have as much as that saved up for her. And I might borrow another ten. But I can't do more. I haven't got it and I should not be comfortable if I did get it. Nonsense, says he. It's to the young man's liking and it's to the girl's, and you were for it, and I passed my word to the old man and he's not against it, so now do you mean to ruin your daughter's happiness ? But I can't do it. Don't you understand plain language ? Rubbish, he says. Stint yourself, pinch, pawn, do any rotten thing you like ; but you've got to marry her off, especially now when it is as good as fixed up and the chance mustn't be lost. You'll be sorry ■ you don't. Think it over to-night and give me your answer to-morrow. But go about it carefully and don't be rash. But couldn't it be fixed up for less, I say ? What ! ■ it haggling over a deal, you're after, offering him half of what he asks ? That won't do here. I have already sounded the young fellow and his father as to that. One shilling less and the chance has gone ! The young fellow had it all worked out. So much for this, so much for that ; anything less than fifty thousand, and the thing is off. So now I've told you. Think it over and buckle to, and I'll want the answer to-morrow evening. And he went off, leaving me open-mouthed and wondering ever since what to do and where to turn. Buckle to, indeed !—ram some sense into that wooden head of his ! It is no good so I came here to, you know—puzzle it out. There is no joke about it. The man wants the answer to-morrow—yes or no.

MONI : Is that all ?

JUDA : What more do you want ?

MONI : Abe, fill up another for us.

JUDA : Stop, stop, I've had enough.

MONI : Be quiet. You have made yourself clear, and now it's my turn. Now, as I make it out, you're short of thirty thousand, which has to be raised somehow. So far, so good. Tell me, how do you stand about your house ?

JUDA : What are you after ? There'll be no selling of it, even if the whole thing goes up in smoke.

MONI : Who's talking of selling ? I am only inquiring if it is unencumbered, if you owe anything on it.

JUDA : Nothing, and then ?

MONI : Now wait a minute. You'll borrow money on it from the bank. Mortgage it, you understand, and I think you'll get all you need for the dowry. Now my suggestion ■ that we both go to-morrow to our man's. He is well known to the banks, and so we shall ask him to take charge of the matter, ■ as to stop them from screwing up the interest too high. When he hears what it is all for, he'll come to the scratch all right and the job will be over in no time.

JUDA : Yes, but how can I pay ?

MONI : Drop that. Or do you imagine I'am going to pay for you ? That is up ■ you. You will do it by degrees. How did you buy the house ? Was it done all at once ? You saved up bit by bit till you had enough. And it'll be the same again—in one year, two years, whenever you can. In the meantime you'll have got your daughter off your hands. Do you see my point ?

JUDA : Yes, it's getting a bit clearer.

MONI : Not a *bit* clearer, you must have it a *lot* clearer. This matter will be settled to-morrow morning, and then you must get them engaged and married, and everything that the Lord commands, and after that : back to the old job—God willing—with two old rags on your shoulder, shouting up and down " Old Clo'es " until you've paid off the debt.

JUDA : ■ there's no other way out, it'll have to be that.

MONI : The Almighty be thanked that you see sense at last. Abe, another one for us.

JUDA : Are you right in your head, Moni ? I shall have an awful time to-night.

MONI : Only this one, and then we'll be off. Now I shall expect you to-morrow early, outside my shop, and we'll get on and do the job. Good luck, Juda, and a blessing on our work.

JUDA : Amen to that. To tell you the truth, you've taken a load off my mind. If this scheme comes off, they'll be paired off all right.

MONI : Go to bed without fear. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

So with prayers on their lips the two went off home, and it was ■ over Sarajevo next day that Bellows Joe's son was engaged to Juda the fent dealer's daughter.

## HOW REZI BAKED MOTZAS

By V. RAKOUS

Translated by PAUL SELVER

V. Rakous (A. Oesterreicher), born 1863, at Stary Brazdim, in Bohemia, and from the age of thirteen he worked as a draper's assistant. Author of several volumes of tales and sketches dealing with Jewish life in the rural districts of Bohemia, where the Jews, while maintaining their racial and religious entity, are intimately associated with their Czech neighbours, whose language is their own. Rakous began to write in 1885. His best-known collection of stories is "Home-Folk and Strangers" (1910). His work is distinguished by its unaffected style and its simple humour, typical examples of which are found in his popular "Modche and Rezi" series. In his articles on the problem of the Jews in Czecho-Slovakia, Rakous advocates the adoption of Czech rather than German culture.

"AND a pound of plums. Have you got that down, Modche?"

"Give me a chance, Rezi," protested Modche, laboriously writing large Jewish script in pencil on a piece of paper from right to left.

"But they've got to be *yomtovdik*," insisted Rezi, "so just see that Schulhof doesn't give you the ordinary kind—God forbid! And now, sugar, make it three pounds and it's got to be from the tip of the mould and there's got to be a *yomtovdik* seal on it; and now, a packet of chicory and there's got to be a printed label on it, to show that it's *yomtovdik*. My gracious me, Modche, it worries me to think that a stupid man like you might go and bring me some *chumetz* or other."

"Why, I've been getting these things for the last thirty years," muttered Modche.

"Then there's half a pound of *yomtovdik* syrup," continued Rezi. "The children'll want something to smear on their motzas. And now the most important thing of all, Modche, ten pounds of flour."

"Flour?" and Modche was so astonished that he dropped his

pencil. "Why, Rezi, you don't mean to say that you're going to bake rolls for Pesach."

"Not rolls, but motzas," said Rezi and looked eagerly at Modche to see how he would take her announcement.

"Gone crazy again," and Modche shook his grizzled head dubiously. Then, in a cautious tone, he continued: "What's this new idea of yours, Rezi? We've always bought what few packets of motzas we needed, and saved ourselves fuss and work. And all of a sudden you take it into your head to do this. You're going to turn the whole place upside down, and what an uproar there'll be, and——"

"You know nothing about it," interrupted Rezi, "but I've got my reasons for wanting to bake motzas at home this year. Haven't you ever heard the way they run down our poor motzas and pretend that we put all sorts of things into them and that they can't be made without a lot of hocus-pocus. Now everyone'll be able to see what's in them and how they're baked. I'm going to invite all the women of the village to this baking, and it'll be done as it used to be years ago, when everyone baked motzas at home. And let me tell you, Modche, it's all been arranged and settled. My sister has got everything you want for making motzas, a board, a pan, a rolling-pin, everything—it all used to belong to the family of our brother-in-law, God rest his soul. She's going to send the things along and do her own baking here as well, and so will the people from Krenek."

"Just do as you please," sighed Modche. "But, Rezi, you don't mean to say that I've got to fetch all that lot from Hradec at my time of life?"

"You haven't got to fetch anything, Modche," explained Rezi. "You'll walk down to Hradec, but you'll come back by rail. I'll go as far as the station to meet you with a hamper and bring everything back myself. But whatever you do, Modche, for heaven's sake don't buy the flour at Schulhof's as well. Goodness knows whether Schulhof has got any *yomtovdik* flour, and even if he had, I don't want any from him. There's nothing like being on the safe side and the only place where they grind real *yomtovdik* flour is at Karásek's mill and the Hradec rabbi himself is on the spot to watch them grinding it. So you'll buy it at Karásek's. But first of all you'll call on the rabbi and he'll give you a note to take to the miller—be sure you ask him nicely for it—so as to

make quite sure that you'll get real *yomtovdik* flour. And when you've fetched the flour from the mill, you must call on the rabbi again and ask him to have a look at the flour and fasten up the bag with a *yomtovdik* seal. There's nothing like being on the safe side."

Thus spoke Rezi and Modche merely sighed and mutely assented.

Snow, mixed with a thin cold rain, unpleasantly lashed Rezi's face when, on a dismal day in March—it was already getting on for nightfall—she waited at Sedletín with a hamper on her back for Modche who was returning by the local train from Hradec with his *yomtovdik* purchases. As a rule, for everyday purposes, she bought everything from Tonicka at Kreněk, and before Tonicka was at Kreněk, from Fried at Vojkovice. But *yomtovdik* things, they had always been bought, even by Rezi's parents and then by Rezi herself for thirty years, nowhere else than from Schulhof's at Hradec. It took three hours to get to Hradec, but then Rezi was quite certain that everything she bought there was really *yomtovdik* and that there was no godless cheating about it. ■ was always Modche's job to do the actual buying, whether ordinary or *yomtovdik*, and Modche never made any attempt to demur.

For some months past a local train had been running from Hradec and to-day was the first time that Modche, on his way back, was to travel by it. Sedletín station was more than half-an-hour's walk from Sedletín. It stood in an open field and consisted of a pole stuck into the ground close to the railway-line, with a board on it bearing the inscription: *Sedletín Station*, which indicated that travellers could mount or alight there.

Rezi, now quite soaked with rain and snow, watched out impatiently for the train. At last it arrived, came to a standstill by the pole, the guard opened one of the doors, and Modche, still in his winter kit, slowly and cautiously stepped down. From inside the carriage a beneficent hand proceeded to hand out Modche's sundry packages which Rezi took from Modche and hastily put into the hamper.

"Come along, dad, come along and let's get going again," urged the guard. "Have you got the lot? That's the style. Right away!" There was the sound of a whistle and the train slowly started moving again.

"Is everything all right, Modche?" inquired Rezi, zealously arranging the parcels in the hamper.

"Yes, Rezi, yes."

Suddenly Modche stopped short and exclaimed in a tone of alarm:

"Good heavens, Rezi, where's the flour?"

Rezi, who was bending over the hamper, straightened her back with a sudden jerk.

"It was in the train," said Modche with chattering teeth, and his tongue grew numb.

"You must have left it there," said Rezi, now thoroughly scared, and she began to wave both arms threateningly at the departing train, while at the top of her voice she bellowed: "Stop, stop!"

The train went on its way with redoubled speed. Rezi, urged by an irresistible impulse, began to rush after it, but soon realised that this proceeding of hers was useless. Already there was only a small wisp of smoke to show the direction in which the train had disappeared. Rezi, utterly overwhelmed, returned to the flabbergasted Modche.

"Well, Modche, perhaps you'll tell me what's to be done now." And Rezi wrung her hands in despair.

"I don't know, Rezi, I——" Modche gulped and was too frightened to look up from the ground.

"Take this hamper on your back and go home," ordered Rezi and it looked as though her customary vigour were slowly returning to her.

"Now I'm going to the station at Hrabesin and I'll get that flour there, if I have to take the matter to court. Now be off with you."

Modche took the hamper on his back and with sadly drooping head slowly made his way home. Rezi then pulled her skirt over her head, so as to have at least a little protection from the bad weather and started dashing along the railway-line towards the station at Hrabesin, which was a good hour's journey from the station at Sedletin. The local train did not go any further than Hrabesin and Rezi felt quite confident that she would rescue her *yomtovdik* flour at the terminus.

But she did not.

When she reached home—it was quite pitch-dark by then—she

was in tears and filled with despair. Nobody at Hrabesin seemed to know anything about the *yomtovdik* flour. It had vanished into thin air. And they went so far as to make fun of Rezi, when she threatened to take the matter to court.

That was a sad evening in Modche's household.

"My *yomtovdik* flour!" lamented Rezi and kept applying cold bandages to her head. "And did you call on the rabbi, Modche?"

"Yes, Rezi," assented Modche ruefully. He was sitting in his place by the fire, all huddled together, so that as little of him as possible could be seen.

"And he gave you a note to take to the miller?"

"Yes, Rezi, everything was just as you said it should be."

"And he had a look at the flour and sealed it up?"

"Yes, Rezi, he put a *yomtovdik* seal on it."

Rezi's grief burst forth with redoubled strength.

"And to think that most likely somebody's baking pancakes with that flour now, and goodness only knows what sort of dripping they're using for it," she lamented heart-rendingly, raising her hands in despair to the ceiling. Then her wrath descended upon the head of the hapless Modche.

"I'm an unlucky woman, that I am," she lamented despairingly. "The things I've had to put up with on your account would fill a book. You make me look a fool in front of everybody. And that's not the worst, either. What am I to do now? I've invited all the neighbours to help me bake the motzas and I can't tell them what's happened to me. Why, they'd laugh me to scorn. The only thing left for me in this fix is to go myself to Hradec to-morrow morning and fetch some more *yomtovdik* flour. It's no use sending you again, for goodness only knows what fresh foolish tricks you'll get up to. Well, we're going to have cheap motzas this year. I'll remember this to my dying day."

Early the next morning Rezi went to Hradec. She walked there and she walked back, and not a living soul knew why Rezi had been to Hradec.

The room buzzed like a beehive. The two windows which looked out on to the village green were wide open—it was a sunny spring day—and outside by the windows there was a crowd of children and grown-ups—all those, in fact, who had not been invited in. And inside, the wives of all the farmers, the crofters

and the cottagers of Sedletín, around a long board, working away with all their might.

Rezi was baking motzas.

Modche's prophecy had come true. The room had been turned upside down. The furniture had been carried out and there was nothing in the room except the long motza board, and on both sides of it the good ladies of Sedletín in their ironed Sunday dresses, rolling motzas. Nácek was kneading dough in the copper pan. Tonicka hadn't been able to come, for she had just been confined with a baby girl. Rezi was by the oven and her sister was bringing her the raw dough and taking away the baked motzas which she put into the larder. And all Modche was fit to do was to pour water into the pan for Nácek.

The whole house was agog with excitement. Sebestka, a young cottager's wife, took it into her head to sing. She struck up the tune : *"Not far from the town there's a grave you can see,"* and the others joined in the chorus. But they all encountered a decisive and indignant objection from Klenotka, an old peasant woman, whose late husband used to lead the procession to Stará Boleslav. Klenotka sternly rebuked Sebestka, the songstress, and insisted that it was unseemly, in fact, sinful, to sing workaday love-ditties while baking such emblems of God's grace as motzas were. And to set a good example, she herself began to sing a pious pilgrims' song, and all the others including Sebestka, in a pious fervour, sang after her. And when they had finished singing one, they started on another and then a third, so that Rezi's motzas were kneaded, rolled and baked, to the accompaniment of those pious pilgrims' songs, to the strains of which the late Klenot from time immemorial had led the procession to Stará Boleslav.

Later in the afternoon the motzas were all baked to a turn. They had proved a complete success and not a single one had been scorched. After the work was finished, Rezi regaled the helpers with a snack : coffee and cookies stuffed with gingerbread, which had been baked on the previous day. During this repast the tongues wagged with a vengeance and all was merry as a marriage bell. Rezi beamed with delight and pride that everything had gone so swimmingly. After the snack they took their leave, and each one with great caution carried home a bonus in the form of one motza. For Rezi was well aware that for each

of these motzas she would receive a loaf of bread as soon as the various ladies did their baking.

Then Nácek and Rezi's sister went off with their motzas and Rezi was left alone with Modche. First of all, Rezi began to pack away her motzas which had involved so many sacrifices. Modche brought the box which had already been prepared by being scrubbed to a snowy whiteness. Rezi lined it with a spotless coverlet and put the motzas in, one after another. When they were all disposed of and the box was quite full, Modche nailed down the lid, and the two of them carried the box up a ladder into the loft. But Rezi's loft was not like the lofts of other mortals in Sedletín. Half of it was filled with straw, but the other half was like a larder. It was paved with bricks which were scrubbed to a blood-red colour, and covered with sacking. Every object in Rezi's household for which she had no further use found a last refuge in this part of the loft. And in the midst of all this useless lumber, which was always veiled by a mysterious twilight—even Modche's wedding top-hat had recently found a resting-place there—in a position of honour stood a large old chest containing Rezi's *yomtovdik* crockery. Heaven knows through the hands of how many generations this crockery had passed, and Rezi prized it above all the treasures in the world. Behind the chest of crockery, in a corner of the loft, a rickety old table had stood from time immemorial, and on this table Rezi and Modche solemnly deposited the box of motzas. They climbed down from the loft, and, as far as Modche was concerned, this concluded the day's work.

That evening, when Modche was getting ready to go to bed—Modche retired with the chickens—he heard Rezi having high words with someone in the yard. When she came into the room, she cantankerously complained that a tramp had slunk into the yard and wanted her to let him stay the night in some corner or other because in the village he could find no place to sleep. But Rezi had been a match for him. A nice thing, indeed, to let him stay there, so that he could set the place on fire or steal something or get up to some other mischief—God forbid!

After doing some more work, Rezi went into the larder, where she continued to mutter abuse about what she described as a pack of rogues and thieves. Modche, however, felt uncomfortable. He had always had a kind, soft heart, and felt sorry for the poor

tramp who had not where to lay his head. After all, he too was a human being, one of God's creatures. Besides, the pleasant spring weather, which had lasted during the day, had suddenly changed, as ■ ■ apt to do in March, and now it was snowing as heavily as at Christmas-time. And the darkness was thick enough to be cut with a knife.

So Modche went out softly and there, sure enough, in front of the back door he beheld the vague outlines of some person unknown. He went up to the tramp and whispered to him.

"You can stay here overnight, but keep quiet and don't let my wife see you. Creep quietly in the loft and lie down there in the straw. And make sure that you get away before daybreak, or else my wife might see you."

"Let's hope to God she doesn't, dad," urged the tramp in a low voice. "I don't want to meet your good lady again; she must be a fierce 'un, dad, without disrespect to you."

Modche waited a little longer while the tramp cautiously and without a sound crawled up the ladder into the loft. He then went back to the room and at once retired for the night. Rezi, as usual, was still grumbling in the larder—possibly she herself did not know what for—but Modche slept the sleep of the just almost as soon as he had lain down. In his slumbers he felt a warm thrill of satisfaction at having performed a good and edifying deed.

"And now, with God's help, we'll fetch the *yomtovdik* crockery and the motzas down from the loft," said Rezi piously one day. It was three days before *yomtov* and the whole cottage from roof to cellar had been made *kosher* and *yomtovdik*. What could not be made *kosher* had been covered by Rezi with *yomtovdik* laths, of which she had an inexhaustible supply. Modche listened to the usual instructions as to how he was to handle the *yomtovdik* crockery so that nothing should come to grief—"You're such a *schlemihl* that you're likely to smash something"—and at the word of command he cautiously climbed up the ladder into the loft. Rezi stood behind him half-way up the ladder and waited for Modche to begin handing her the various items of crockery. After a long while Modche's arm made its appearance in the aperture of the loft and Rezi, all excited and solemnly atremble, received from him the first piece of *yomtovdik* crockery—a large grater, grimy with age, which was used for grating "thick"

motzas. After that they made more rapid progress. Modche and Rezi placed the pots, dishes and pans of diverse shapes one by one on the ground on top of a layer of straw, as majestically and solemnly as if these potsherds were the most precious treasures in the world. She carefully counted each one until the whole lot had been properly checked.

"Now give me the box with the motzas," she shouted into the loft from half-way up the ladder.

"Modche, the motzas," Rezi again shouted, after vainly waiting for a while.

A complete hush was the only reply.

"You haven't had a fainting fit, you old silly, have you?" said Rezi in alarm, and stepped into the loft.

There, in the semi-twilight, she beheld Modche standing completely dumbfounded in the middle of the loft, motionless and speechless.

"What are you up to, Modche?" said Rezi, giving him a good shaking. "You'll be the death of me. Why don't you fetch out the motzas?"

Modche gave a start as if he were waking up from a deep sleep.

"Motz—motzas," he stammered, and with a fixed stare his eyes roamed from one end of the loft to the other.

"Yes, the motzas," repeated Rezi testily. "Why don't you fetch them out? Where are they?"

And Rezi's gaze willy-nilly fixed itself upon the corner of the loft where, with her own hands and assisted by Modche, she had placed the box of motzas on the old rickety table. A cry of horror re-echoed in the loft. Rezi leaped towards the table—no, there could be no doubt, the table was empty, the box with the motzas had vanished.

"Where are the motzas?" cried Rezi in despair. "Speak, Modche, where are my motzas?"

Modche moaned and that was his only reply.

"I'm asking you, Modche, where are my motzas?" repeated Rezi threateningly.

"I don't know, Rezi, God is my witness."

"Modche!"

Rezi said nothing more, but beneath her crushing glance Modche nearly sank on to his knees.

"Perhaps ■ was that tramp," Modche muttered in mortal anguish.

"Tramp, tramp," and in Rezi's eyes was suddenly kindled the light of knowledge and truth. She knew Modche through and through and she could read his guilt clearly in his agonised glance.

"You let that tramp in here for the night, you let him in, didn't you?"

There was a stormy rumble in Rezi's voice.

"You let him in."

"But he——" stammered Modche, "what would a tramp want motzas for?" he admitted indirectly.

"You, you——" Rezi nearly had a stroke. "How did he know that there were motzas in the box? Was it labelled? He thought there were goodness knows what valuables in it, and when he saw the motzas, he threw them away or jumped on them in a temper."

The words trickled from Rezi's lips like the course of a torrent. But suddenly, as if she had only just realised her grievous and irretrievable loss, she covered her face with her hands and cried despairingly. "My motzas, my motzas!" and the loft re-echoed with her piteous weeping.

"Twice I bought flour for them," she said between her fits of sobbing. "What a waste of money and work. And now, and now, God will punish you, Modche, mark my words, or where would His justice be if He didn't. Anyhow, you'll be the death of me and if I don't die, if this docan't kill me, I'll get a separation, yes, that's what I'll do, let me tell you, Modche. I won't stay under the same roof with you. And now get yourself ready and go to Krenek. Tell Tonicka and Nácek what you've been up to—tell them the whole story, so that they can see what a clever uncle they've got—and then ask them to let us have half of their motzas. But if you play any tricks with them——"

Modche did not stop to hear any more.

He vanished from the loft with a briskness and speed surprising for his years, and by the time that Rezi, half fainting, staggered down the ladder, Modche was well away and out of reach of Rezi's righteous wrath.

And Rezi, having first tied a wet cloth round her head, sank down into the straw amidst the *yontovdik* crockery and wept as ■ her heart would break.











